HORATIO'S STORY

GORDON KING

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Hon

(Woman's marriage fails)

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O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

—HAMLET TO HORATIO.

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To
C. W. K.

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CHAPTER I

Rhoda Lispenyard-Child always had an enticing way of getting people to do favours for her. A slightly beckoning movement of the lips, an uncertain quiver of the eyes, or a designating gesture from her always gloveless hand would bring me, or almost any man she knew, at once to her feet. What she wanted seemed to make no difference. But it must be admitted that she used this power rarely and then most sparingly. In fact, she prided herself upon her independence with perfect justice, and you always felt in her debt, or at least I did, and when she asked some trivial thing I thought she bestowed upon me some vast favour. For friendship knows how impossible it is to justify its mysterious faith in devotion. Perhaps real friendship begins only when we cast aside all hope of keeping the scales even, when gratitude gives up all hope of paying its debt.

When she left us finally Rhoda gave me a last opportunity to serve her. She made me promise that I would clear her name and explain to those who knew her what her life had really been. I agreed to do so, and at that time I expected to find it a simple duty. I had thought that people would be pleased to learn the truth, but upon attempting to explain the situation to those who had previously, and I think erroneously, thought themselves

concerned in Rhoda's affairs, I ran amuck of traits of human nature the existence of which, in my naive way, I had never suspected.

Almost invariably her friends and relatives took the matter in one of two ways: either they desired to quiet the troubled waters in order to diminish the possible effect of Rhoda's vicious example, and so closed the doors upon any discussion of the scandal; or, as if to enhance their own reputations both social and intellectual, they insisted upon rating their version of the gossip higher than mine, and adding to it any untoward implication their puerile imaginations could supply.

I therefore gave up hope of complying with Rhoda's request so simply, and am now determined to write down the whole story, and overcome thereby the sting of having failed to fulfil an act of friendship. Rhoda knew better than I. She told me in the first place that it would be necessary to do it in writing, but I would not then concede the point as I do now. Those who refused to listen, and those who insisted upon aggravating her error, will be driven to read this by their own malignant curiosity. Henceforth they may continue their falsehood if they please, but if they continue to convince the honest-minded I shall certainly be remiss in my undertaking.

Of course Rhoda did not ask me to give an account of her life merely to explain away an idle scandal that she thought clouded her last hours in Belmont unjustly. She believed herself the epitome of the modern woman—strictly speaking, the contemporary woman—and visited upon herself at all times the ruthless severity of a self-sacrificing member of an idealistic movement. What preyed upon her mind unduly was the thought that she had lived in vain. She deplored having the generally ignominious opinion of herself prevail over those few whom she loved and who had, indeed, cared for her.

In asking me to be the one to clear her name she used deliberation not altogether characteristic of her nature as I understood it. Usually Rhoda arrived at her conclusions as fast as the problems presented themselves to her, by means of intuition, a faculty commonly said to be the special endowment of the feminine mind. I think that this time Rhoda arrived at her conclusion by the masculine process of elimination. She thought that I was the only friend left who could do it, and she believed me, though in some respects hostile toward her as a critic, fair enough and imaginative enough to deal justly and sympathetically with her remains. She thought too that I was the only one of her friends with sufficient leisure to undertake the rehabilitation of her reputation.

It was characteristic of her to overlook the fact that I preserve an unusual margin of leisure in my daily life because I regard it as a precious good, without which life seems to me, if not unbearable, certainly worthless. But she is by no means the only person to think that because I refrain from obvious activity I have nothing to do; the notion is unhappily spread abroad.

Whatever the obligations of friendship, my propensities hardly favour me in carrying out Rhoda's request. I rarely read works of biography or prose fiction, and I have never possessed the slightest desire to compose them. It will therefore be a difficult task for me to hand down the narrative justly.

For one thing, try as I may, I shall not be able to keep myself wholly out of it. I was too close to Rhoda for her to have escaped my being a significant fact in her environment. Another reason is that one cannot do more than approximate the truth that one desires to reveal. For the first time I realize why painters sometimes employ the delightful subterfuge of giving only the back of the model directly and showing the face through a

mirror. Rhoda's own testimony becomes mine when I present it as evidence. And as is true of almost every biographic work, other faculties of the mind than those involved in a mere retailing of fact are necessary. I shall have to interpret the facts of Rhoda's life as I go along, for they presented themselves to me during a period of years of acquaintance and are so small a part of her story as to be in themselves quite useless.

To emphasize once more, at the danger of being tedious, the personal element in this undertaking, what was once seen and heard by me has now passed through a process of memory and recollection, a process that gives it form, colour, and remodelling according to the eccentricities of my own mind.

In order, therefore, to reduce the fraction of error to a minimum, I may be pardoned perhaps if I first give an account of my own life. This, too, will have a fraction of error but, unless I am mistaken, it will nevertheless serve as a corrective for my version of the story of Rhoda Lispenyard-Child. In other words the more nearly we can establish the author's point of view, the better can we correct his errors of perspective.

David Hume began his autobiography with this remark: "It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore I shall be short." Without attempting to conceal my vanity I shall, if possible, use fewer words than he and come a little nearer the truth.

My name is Lee Seebohm, and I was born in Boston, 5 January, 1876. My childhood was spent in that city and in Washington, D. C., my father being a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from 1874 to 1898; but, after the time I entered Latin Grammar School, I rarely left Boston or its suburbs, being averse to travel and more than willing to bear the ignominy of provinciality. I was sent to college at Arlington University and

there distinguished myself generally in my studies and particularly in philosophy and the sciences closely allied to metaphysical speculation. Upon taking a degree in 1899 I received with great delight a three years' resident fellowship, and applied myself vigorously to my research. Besides taking the historical courses of study common to most American colleges, I went to Harvard University and studied the then contemporary schools of thought, especially the work of the late Professor William James, the late Professor Hugo Münsterberg, and Dr. George Santayana. In 1902 I had the privilege of accepting the position of Lecturer in Philosophy at Arlington which I held for seven years.

Although my academic duties took a great deal of my time during this period I pursued my independent studies without serious interruption. For two years I studied logic and mathematics; for one year, æsthetics; and for four years, psychology, being convinced that the future of philosophical thought would depend upon suggestions from that science. Following these labours I published my first book, a work on psycho-physics, based on a course of Lowell Institute Lectures that I delivered in 1908.

In 1909 I became a full professor but I suffered shortly thereafter a great depression. My work dissatisfied me, and I seemed to lose a certain self-confidence that had always sustained me before and has since. The cure was simple, once I lit upon it. I recommenced my education at the beginning and worked right through to the end at a cost of five years. Extravagant as this was I felt repaid. In the autobiographic *Education of Henry Adams* more than one chapter comes to a close with the remark "this was not education." I often wondered whether he would have reached the same conclusion had he used my method, and what the result would have been

had I followed the method he recommended—that of visiting world's fairs habitually.

At the age of forty-five, therefore, I find myself with fairly extensive knowledge and a more or less disciplined mind in the field of learning that concerns me, but with very little in constructive work actually accomplished. Perhaps it does not matter, for the philosophy that preceded the recent war is doomed to perish, and in the remaining years of my life I hope to take an insignificant part in the beginnings of a new renaissance. For I think that we shall be unwilling to put our faith in any system of knowledge that does not avoid the dangers of romantic idealism and equally romantic materialism or naturalism. Civilization, I have come to believe, must be based upon a scale of values essentially different from that of this generation, and it is precisely with the matter of fundamental value that philosophy and religion concern themselves.

But as I write this I am conscious that Rhoda would hardly consider that I approach any nearer to the fulfilment of her wish and my most rash promise. She would declare that if I can come no nearer to the life of a man whom I know fairly well, I cannot be expected to deal with a woman whom I knew surely less well. I shall therefore try again, this time with the assistance of Scotch and soda, to tell the story of my life with more consideration for the reason that prompts me to do it.

My father was not a bad sort. He really loved children and treated them with kindness and indulgence. He did not, however, become sentimental or erratic over them. He was a picturesque, humorous, and generous old soul, excessively cultivated and chivalrously moral. I never knew what he did in politics; as a public man he seemed to me evasive and a good deal of a coward. No doubt he wanted to do for his constituents the best that he knew

how, as he certainly did for his family, but the fear of upsetting the sure progress of the Senate inhibited him constantly, a fear which I could never understand, for I always thought the Senate a legitimate place for my father to introduce legislation.

Of my mother, who died whilst I was still an infant, I can of course remember nothing. She seems, however, to have had an effect on the characters of my elder brothers, both of whom are considerably older than I. I cannot say that they were more pleasure-seeking than I, for I was from the earliest beginnings of personality an indulgent and obstinate fellow, but they found their pleasures in more concrete and material ways. They were more emotional, more sensitive, more practical. Both of them embraced the legal profession. Perhaps in a few years we can say that they have been more successful than I, but at present it would be unsafe to assume that they are nearer the doors of their conceived paradise than I mine.

Our essential differences may have been due to the fact that they were brought up by a woman and I, arriving into the family so late that I always felt my welcome to be a matter of charity, was raised by my aged father. From the way in which my brothers seduce juries and clients to this day, and from the way in which they fight shy of the slightest abstraction or theory in discourse with a burst of outraged innocence, I believe that, in spite of their great stature and proud physical beauty, they received a larger share of the feminine genius of the race than their younger brother ever hopes to possess.

The first twenty-four years of my life were without romance of sufficient significance to retain a place in my memory, but during the first year that I held my fellowship, I fell in love with a Radcliffe girl, an affair that I shall have occasion to describe in detail later. For the

present all I need say is that the lady in question could not see anything in my attentions that gave promise of future happiness.

The effect of having the woman of one's choice reject one with a decisiveness from which appeal is useless varies much according to temperament. In my case it had the effect of rendering me generally susceptible to the enchantments of women, and in particular eager to take the offensive against young women who in some ways seemed similar to her who had rejected me.

Being fairly active at that time in Boston society and having a slight acquaintance with many young women, I was exposed to a great deal of feminine charm, and within three months of the time I had stubbed my toe at Radcliffe College, I became secretly engaged to a young girl whose chief characteristics were her beauty and her high social standing. We straightway eloped, and I remember that upon our return my brothers for the first time divided their opinion of me. Hallam, the elder, said that it was extraordinarily inconsiderate of me not to remember the state of my father's nerves. Sidney, however, grasped my hand warmly; "I'm so damned glad," he had the impudence to say, "that you remembered to go through with the formality of a wedding that I forgive you everything!" As a matter of fact I had thought that my father would suffer less from one sharp blow than the excitement of an engagement and a formal wedding, and Sidney's remark did not give me any more pleasure than Hallam's censure. Forgiveness, I have found, is something that always gets in the way unless you have a craving for it, when one word will surfeit. But I was dazed at the time, and did not much care what was said.

My father being then hopelessly feeble, we remained in the old house on Beacon Hill, both of my brothers having establishments of their own further out on Common-

wealth Avenue. Shortly thereafter the old Senator took sick and died. We remained in town; it was my wish to go to the suburbs but my wife preferred a more active social life than the outskirts of Boston could offer her.

There is no boredom like the tediousness of a social life that for one reason or another fails to give the distraction, the stimulation, and the friendliness that a man feels that he has a right to expect when he puts on his dinner jacket. There is no loneliness like the solitude of meeting constantly goodly numbers of men and women on terms of accepted social equality, and feeling that the equality is so pervasive as to preclude the possibility of having one real, chosen friend in the lot.

I began to be restless. Boston society could not even waste time gracefully. It could neither inspire health nor permit the charming vices of exotic decadence. In less than a year I began dining privately in my library, and very shortly thereafter it was generally understood that I was out of society. I pleaded work: what I really wanted was leisure.

This return to normal living strengthened me to survive what was probably the greatest shock of my life. In May, 1903, my wife committed suicide by throwing herself into the sea. She had left New York three days previous and was on her way to France where I was to have joined her at the close of the academic year.

This event added to the isolation into which I had been retiring, and it was some time before I resumed any intercourse with my relatives and old acquaintances. Being then a lecturer in philosophy, I went out to Arlington and lived at the university, but there was much that was unsatisfactory in that. The students had a way of drawing upon me too deeply and leaving me in a state of intellectual impotence. I cannot spend the day in discussions and explanations, and then have four or five young

men find their way to my room at night and oblige me to talk. There comes a time when a teacher should turn upon the pack of wolves and say: "Gentlemen, I have no perpetual fountain of wisdom. Why do you insist upon pumping me dry? You must give me peace to go on with my studies; you must let me rejuvenate myself."

I determined to build a house in the country and live the life of a scholar and a gentleman. At Belmont I found a delightful site not far from the golf links of the country club. I sold my Beacon Hill property and got to work with architect and builder. First I had one large room constructed, to serve primarily as a library. It is of oak with great rafters and panels, and a large gray fireplace—of limestone, I think. In one end there is an organ, the only musical instrument that I play with any pleasure, and in the other end are my books and table. The longer walls are cut, on one side with the fireplace in front of which are a divan, a bench and a few chairs, and the remaining wall is cut with French windows opening upon the porch. I took my father's best rugs, and decorated some shelves of my bookcases with pottery, chiefly Persian or alleged to be so, that I had gathered myself; and I have since been collecting a few Zorn etchings for the panels, which is odd, my friends say, because I don't like swimming.

The windows are fairly large, but I did not give the room as much light as a painter or artist would require. I enjoy long shadows with their delicate gradations of colour rather than the high lights of most studios. In this room I placed most of the things to which I am attached, and of course my small library, which consists of only some four thousand books, the value of which, if they could have value for anyone else, lies in the selection.

The remainder of the house I left wholly to the archi-

tect, and he finished it with a pleasing combination of simplicity and comfort. It was completed in the spring of 1905.

There I have sat over fifteen years going on with my studies and speculations. It is only fair to say that during the great upheaval of the World War I remained at peace there without taking the slightest part in it. I acted as though there were really no war going on. I am no pacifist by intellectual or religious conviction. I am inclined that way by habit, temperament, and occupation. I thought my work so much more important than anything else I could do, and I argued that there ought to be at least one civilian left to fight for. The ease with which European and American philosophers threw down their pens and took up their swords, or practiced journalism on behalf of the non-combatant mobilization, shocked me thoroughly. It seemed to me par excellence the time to sit on a barrel of rum and think.

I began to lose faith in the power of contemporary thought to exert any influence for good. It seemed to me that civilization would have to produce a new philosophy, and that the spectacle of our greatest thinkers all throwing aside their work and taking up the social and military sciences, showed quite clearly that they themselves had no doubts of the ineffectiveness of their powers. I succumbed to a vast skepticism which I have shaken off only very recently.

Meanwhile the mention of a few events during this period will help to explain the apparent monotony of my career. It was during my third year as lecturer that I drafted my book on psycho-physics. A few years later it was received with a most profound silence; but lately, however, I find it quoted, which gives me pleasure. The only deliberate criticism that it received was from the celebrated Dr. Edelman of New York, who attacked it

in the medical journal with all the vehemence and arrogance of the psychoanalytic school.

Nevertheless it established me as a philosopher in the estimation of those who read either the book or the review. My colleagues at Arlington gave it kind attention. Unfortunately the publishers never delivered themselves of five hundred copies, and what they did sell I am sure went to libraries. While there was still some feeble discussion of the merits of this little book, I had a stroke of good fortune that has meant a good deal to me, chiefly through the added estimation in which I am held as a result of it.

One of the more remote satellites of Arlington University is the New Balliol Theological Seminary which we absorbed only very recently. New Balliol is characterized by a plentiful lack of students and, distinct from its ample endowment and real property, one endowed chair created through the last will and testament of one John Jay Brewer who died in 1869. The securities of this endowment having increased abundantly and without taxation, the stipend is now between eleven and twelve thousand dollars, which is more than sufficient for most philosophers whether they have private means or not. With the death of the late Professor Preserved Hobhouse, this chair fell vacant in December, 1908, and in March of the following year the Trustees and Faculty of Arlington University met to consider filling the vacancy. The voting was exceptionally warm and the learned gentlemen remained deadlocked until the middle of April. No quarter being given to either of the opposing candidates, it became necessary to bring out some dark horses. Luckily being one of the first to be considered in this light by the fatigued electors, and having friends on both sides, I won the election. To the amazement of my elders and betters, I was at the June commencement in

1909 given the chair as the third Brewer Professor of Christian Morals.

It must be admitted, however, that although there are six matriculated divines at the university, I do not have much opportunity to fulfil the wishes of the founder of the chair. Familiarly I am known to the students as the Christian Professor of Brewer Morals, and from the present state of my cellar there is more justice in their jest than they themselves suppose. Actually I give only two courses a year: The Philosophy and Psychology of Religion and Religious Experience, and European Religion and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century.

That gives some impression of the kind of man I am, neither old nor young, and about ready to put together the work of twenty years' reflection and study. I live a lonely life at Belmont and lecture four times a week at Arlington. Usually I see little of my neighbours, though there are some who are indulgent enough to tolerate my playing the organ now and then. When the weather is suitable I try a few holes of golf at the country club hard by, where I have a few acquaintances. My students, who are now very few—sometimes not more than twenty meet me in the course of the year—think of me as an aloof and disagreeable person; but not one of them has ever come to me for assistance that I have not done what I could without sparing myself, a fact that is not generally known. It is my misfortune that circumstances prevent me from making the initial advances. These circumstances are my irritable disposition, my love for leisure and solitude, and my caution lest I intrude upon the young. Children have need of disciplining and advised intrusion in education, but by the time young men and women reach my courses they ought to be ready to stand on their own feet. They may accept or reject my lectures as they please, but I take care not to interfere

with their budding maturity. Sometimes, though rarely, I profit by their criticism.

One important fact that I neglected to mention is that my wife bore me a son, Wentworth Seebohm, now in his twentieth year, who has been something of a responsibility in my life, and will be, I suppose, a year or so longer. When not away at school he lives with me at Belmont. Partly because I do not wish him to fall a victim to the seductions of luxury at too early an age, and partly because I count the years I spent in Boston living up to the traditions of my father and mother the most wasted in my life, I live now in the utmost simplicity, with only a man and his wife to serve as butler and cook, and a chauffeur whose wife practices the arts of a laundress somewhat inadequately.

Having given some notion of myself and the preoccupations of my life, I shall now proceed with the story of Miss Rhoda Lispenyard, later Mrs. O'Flarity Child. It is to be hoped that what can fairly be expected of me as narrator is now reasonably clear, and that the point of view thus suggested will help us to see whether she was, as she thought herself to be, profoundly misunderstood, and, if so, to clear up what misunderstanding we can.

CHAPTER II

Rhoda Lispenyard was born in Boston in 1883. She is said to have been my first cousin twice removed (however such things are computed) and I have never argued to the contrary. The span of the removal, I thought as a boy, was as great as it well could be in Boston. It embraced the gulf that separates the rich and the poor. Rhoda came into a branch of the family that possessed less means by far than the rest and, from all I can gather, her childhood must have been fairly unpleasant on that account if no other, for her immediate family seemed opposed to any pleasures commensurate with its income. At any rate I have never known her to look back, as most of us do, and say: "Those were the happy days." Even by the familiar process of idealizing things in retrospect, she could never raise them to par.

Her father was an improvident politician, one time collector of the port, which was his highest attainment. Usually he remained out of office or appointment, and as his independent means amounted to almost nothing the family suffered. It can be said of some politicians that their desire to render unselfish service justifies their poverty, for the poorer the politician the more he is generally thought honest and sincere. Amos Lispenyard managed to escape all reverence for his poverty. He had never convinced anyone that he was in politics for other than his own good, and there is something piteous about plying any profession for purely material ends without attaining them.

Rhoda's mother had a certain sweetness of nature, but she was a woman of more than ordinary stupidity and

timidity, and one who fell an easy and frequent victim to hysteria. She possessed, as do many whose circumstances have been greatly reduced in life, a superstructure of character that never seemed convincingly her own. While at bottom most of her acts were actuated by motives of generosity and affection, mingled with a keen sense of duty, she acted during the last years of her life according to a second nature of great fear and suspicion of evil. Particularly when her children were involved did her mind seethe with the phantoms of cowardice. Above all they should climb out of the poverty that suppressed them. She feared everything and everybody, and developed a false sense of martyrdom that Rhoda despised.

Mrs. Lispenyard's hope lay in the ultimate success of her four children and it was usually when one of them showed signs of failure that she broke down. Instinctively she tried to instill in their hearts an opportunist philosophy. Against her better nature she wanted them to be shrewd. At school studies did not matter; grades and prizes were what she expected them to obtain. In social matters she retired rather than entrenched. The family suffered isolation through the fact that the children were not permitted to associate with their neighbours. When circumstances were better, Mrs. Lispenyard would argue, she would entertain again. Meanwhile she kept a stiff upper lip and dreamed of a future attack on Back Bay.

Rhoda was the third child and the second daughter. The elder brother was a worthless fellow who died of typhoid in the Spanish War. The sister married early and badly and had very little to do with the rest of the family. The younger brother, Conrad, has developed a character and manner that would grace any family. His limitations have been mental; more specifically, he lacks imagination and alertness of mind, and thoroughly hates

using his brain except in matters of business. Conrad left school early and became an automobile salesman. To-day, I understand, he is a sales manager with a large territory and seems to satisfy everyone who has any dealings with him.

Rhoda saw very little of Conrad later in life but she remembered him with sympathy and respect, though she could find no positive reason for doing so. It was more because he refrained from doing the mean little things that had the standing of polite attentions in her family. He was indifferent rather than meddling; he didn't like his father and mother and let it be known that his real life went on elsewhere. Conrad knew that Rhoda felt as he did, but he did not understand that her real life went on within herself. "I'm going out to-night," he would say, "hang a light in my room if dad comes in early." But as their alliance was purely defensive their friendship was soon forgot when the need of it disappeared.

It was hard for a boy brought up as I was to have any conception of the life of a little girl. The significant part of it seemed to go on behind closed doors. By the time he becomes a young man he no longer feels the curiosity that once made him pull back the curtains and watch the girls passing in the street and wonder about them.

I recall meeting Rhoda only once while we were still children. She and Conrad were visiting our great-uncle Thaddeus Collamore in the country and I was there at the same time. Her appearance and behaviour were not remarkable for a girl of twelve; I did not then think she would ever be good to look at, and I am not sure that she ever was in any abstract sense. She romped about the farm with obvious pleasure. My image of her includes such things as two long tightly braided ropes of

hair with saucy, stringy ribbons close to the frayed ends. Or, apparently unawares, her big head would appear a choppy sea of curl-papers, which I could never understand for her hair was not straight. She was tall and thin and had almost no body at all. Her legs were so slender that you could not have seen them had it not been for her rather large, unkempt boots and the torn knees of her faded cotton hose.

There was already something agile, threatening, rebellious about her. She would clap her hands nervously and without apparent reason, and then run and jump recklessly. "I aren't going to play any more," she would call out and be off to sulk by herself. Little Rhoda's eyes were often wet with tears, but they were full of fight.

During the same visit I once walked to the post office with her, a mile or two distant from the farm.

"What are you going to do when you grow up?" she asked me. I was then eighteen and very serious indeed.

"I've no idea," I answered, heaving a profound sigh to which she paid no attention.

"Uncle Tad isn't married, is he?"

"No, Rhoda, he's a bachelor."

"I'm not going to be married when I grow up."

"What does your mother say to that?" I asked.

"Oh, mother doesn't know; she thinks I'm going to be married. That's why she sends me to dancing school."

"Do you like dancing school, Rhoda?"

"I hate it!" she said with a great deal of pride.

"Maybe when you're a little older you'll like doing what mother likes you to do. Did you ever think of that?"

"No, I won't!" she said, clapping her hands in a senseless way that annoyed me.

"You can't be sure, Rhoda. When I was your age I wanted above all things to become a Latin teacher, but

now that I've finished my six years of Latin I'd hate to teach it more than anything in the world."

That silenced her for a while. Her whole body seemed to reflect a buffeted mood. She planted her feet carefully and awkwardly and watched them as she walked along. Finally she began kicking up the dust of the dry dirt road with each step, placing her foot sidewise and dragging it along to the next position. At length a small particle of the great cloud of dust brought forth a hearty sneeze from me, the resounding cry of which attracted Rhoda's attention.

"Excuse me," she said, a little frightened, "I didn't mean to do it. I'm afraid I was rude!" She ran over to the side of the road and, sitting down, covered her face with her hands.

I brushed the dust from my trousers and laughed. "It gave you such pleasure that I didn't like to mention it. Come on, take my handkerchief and dry your eyes. Nobody's going to be cross with you."

"Thanks," she said, "I'm always doing the wrong thing. You won't tell, will you?"

"Never!"

With a helping hand she came to her feet. Her tears had softened the dust on her face and made muddy stains on her cheeks. She used my handkerchief to advantage.

It seemed to me even then that she was bothered with the thought that she was not doing what people thought she should, and that she couldn't have a good time without packing everyone off about his business. On the way home, as we neared my uncle's, I became lost in thought. Suddenly aware that Rhoda was no longer at my side, I looked about and spied her perhaps a few hundred feet down the road.

"Now it's my turn to apologize for being rude," I said when she came up.

"I won't tell anybody," she replied kindly.

"That's good of you," I said, "because I hate being scolded."

"So do I."

"Rhoda," I asked after a moment, "what do you want to do after you grow up?"

"I want to be alone by myself and have fun!" she said instantly.

My great-uncle Thaddeus loved children excessively. He was very old and testy and we all teased him unmercifully to his face, but he seemed to like it and would shake a stick at us good-humouredly. With the privilege of the generation that preceded my father's he experienced no embarrassment in helping himself generously to a slice of plug, which he was inclined to chew thoughtfully when not smoking. The trouble with America, he would say whenever he was willing to admit that there was anything the trouble, is the affectedness and effeminacy of a manhood that gave up good chewing-tobacco for luxurious cigars and "nasty little cigarettes." Possessed of vast family pride, he would try to get political preferment for Amos Lispenyard, but he was too old and too good-natured to accomplish anything. People would not keep their promises to him, though they would take his money without scruple.

Democracy with Uncle Tad was a religion. It seemed connected in his mind with large families and prosperity. I used to wonder what he had been like as a younger man, for the few convictions that remained to him were like so many mighty trees that, although seriously damaged, had managed to remain standing while a forest fire had obliterated the wood beneath them and given birth to a crop of impertinent fire weed.

It helped to satisfy his passion for large families to assemble each year at his farm at Chester, Massachusetts,

a goodly number of grandnephews and grandnieces; he took care to invite everyone who might possibly be imagined in some way related to him, and I sometimes think that his passion for democracy was due to his desire to keep the subject of discrepancy of income from attaining too much importance in the family.

Thaddeus Collamore was a man of few responsibilities, ample means, and great generosity. After that summer he undertook, for example, the education of Rhoda and Conrad. I have never understood, and perhaps it is fatuous to ask, whether he did it out of love for the two children or because he did not like to see that branch of the family run down; but he did it beautifully. He was one of those men who know how to give gifts. No one's feelings were hurt and hardly anyone knew it.

Thus life picked up for Rhoda after her twelfth year. She could go to better schools, could have better books and clothes. Her piano and dancing classes, though quite as conventional and unpleasant as possible, at least had the advantage of being generally considered the best. Cooking, dish-washing, and sewing still continued at home. It was not that these operations are in themselves unpleasant, for in fair doses they have a salutary effect. It was rather that the conditions under which they were performed were squalid; it was because her mother and father looked down upon themselves for doing such things and thought them beneath their dignity that Rhoda hated it all so.

That, I think, was the secret of the unhappiness that clouded the Lispenyard family. Unfortunately as time went on it expanded and consumed rather than exterminated itself. Despising themselves led to jealousy of Rhoda, who was proud and independent, and who would almost certainly succeed in escaping that poverty in the course of a few years. This hostility accentuated and deepened Rhoda's vision of the life beyond and her unwil-

lingness to come to terms with life as it surrounded her. She thrust herself forward upon her imagination. Her first childish plan of prolonged celibacy was nothing but a vague desire to escape, and it vanished with an increasing realization of the economic and social structure of life as it was; but the effects of this vision never seemed to leave her. Even before she went to college, and it was perhaps the reason for her going, she saw the possibility of making for herself a life based upon a capacity to earn her living in some way not altogether distasteful.

It was always a matter of regret to me that I did not know Rhoda as a child, but it was rare indeed for a Boston lad to have any notion of a girl before her debut. Every girl had a debut in those days, though it was not always celebrated in the fashionable way with a day set for it. Usually it meant only a new frock, or a new idea, but there came a time in the life of the normal girl when she changed her attitude toward young men significantly.

Besides my vague recollection of that summer at Uncle Tad's, I have no notion of what Rhoda was like before she was seventeen or eighteen. Even what she told me reminiscently failed to make anything clear in my mind. She did not live in Back Bay, but the traditions and aspirations of the family made her suffer from having to assume manners and an attitude that certainly did not have any relation to life as she had perforce to live it, and very likely did not have any application outside of Back Bay, and perhaps not a great deal there. The Lispenyards got the very worst that New England had to offer; they could never do more than imitate, and imitators are rarely fortunate in their selections.

I saw nothing of her until her freshman year at Radcliffe College, which was the first year of my fellowship at Arlington. I was then working regularly in Cambridge under James and Münsterberg, and we were therefore

neighbours a good part of the time. At Thanksgiving that year Uncle Tad mobilized the family at his table in Brookline. He swore—it turned out falsely—that he gathered us together for the last time, and most of us got out our handkerchiefs.

Rhoda was my dinner partner; the lady on the other side of me was someone I have never seen before or since except at funerals and weddings, and I paid no particular attention to her. Rhoda had lost most of her childishness but she was by no means a woman. Her body seemed to have paused in its rapid growth and busied itself in filling in and lopping off, in giving form and character that came short by a good deal of any completeness. Nevertheless, its very incompleteness had charm. There was nothing final about her, nothing decided unless perhaps an irritable temperament. So much remained possible that she appealed to the imagination. Her features did not yet hang together as they afterward did. You were aware that she had fine, clear eyes, but it took a year or two before you were aware of her glance. Her mouth, too, baffled me. It stood out from her face aind seemed eager to speak. A few years later I waited for her words. Her hair was brown and curling; her eyes, gray and fearless; the cheek bones high, the nose regular, and her mouth and chin determined without sharpness.

"When are you going to have a coming-out party?" I asked stupidly by way of beginning.

"I did," she said, "but nobody knew anything about it."

"You might have told us," I said.

"There was nothing to tell. I simply decided to consider the party an accomplished fact. That was much the easiest way and there didn't need to be any discussion about it."

"I never saw you looking so well," I ventured.

She flew to arms at once. "Must everyone talk about my appearance!" she said, her eyes flashing.

"Sorry," I said in embarrassment. "I didn't know you were touchy about it."

"I'm not, but I do wish that men wouldn't talk to girls as though one's person and one's small talk were all one's good for." Her tone and manner attracted more attention than I thought it deserved. She had obviously got angry over nothing. I could see in the faces watching us from across the table the hope that she would become angry enough to make a scene, and, anxious that they should not be gratified and that Rhoda should have ample time to regain her equanimity, I turned to my acquaintance of weddings and funerals and beat the air for something to say. Just then the fowl was laid before my great-uncle and I remarked to this lady on my right with a loud, clear, spontaneous voice:

"Did you ever see such a flat-breasted turkey?"

No sooner had the words left my lips than I realized that by an absent-minded confusion of expression my remark was capable of being interpreted in more than one way. The shouts of laughter from my always ribald father and the politically inclined Mr. Lispenyard convinced me that it would be futile for me to try to extricate myself. Rhoda, to my amazement, whispered in my ear almost inaudibly:

"Did you think it was a spring chicken?" and then stifled a laugh which assured me, I don't know just why, that she knew that I had made a slip of the tongue.

After dinner I sought her out and we managed to get a minute or two together.

"My conversation," I ventured timidly, "is not always as banal as it was at dinner."

"I hope not," said Rhoda, lacing her fingers together and stretching the palms out as far as the arms could

reach. She seemed to be looking, not only through the window, but at something far beyond.

"But you mustn't expect too much on an occasion like this."

"I hate big dinner parties," she said deliberately, "especially when they are family affairs."

"They're no harder for you than they are for me."

"Aren't they though!" She lost her momentary serenity and was almost angry at me again. "Do you have the feeling that everyone is looking at you here and saying: 'There's Rhoda Lispenyard, being educated by Uncle Tad, because her father's no good? Nobody in that family is any good anyway. They're all baggage, but they have to be helped out.' Do you think you should like to feel that way, Lee Seebohm?"

"I certainly shouldn't feel that way unless I did like it."

"You couldn't help it, if you were in my circumstances," she said bitterly.

"Well," I said with embarrassment, being moved by her emotion, "there are only one or two people here who know what Uncle Tad is doing. I can only speak for myself and my father, and I can assure you that neither I nor the Senator have any such feeling. Did you imagine that I looked down upon you?"

"Yes," she said, "I think you do."

"Is that why you cut me short when I remarked that I thought you are getting to be awfully good-looking?"

"I hate that the worst of all. People are beginning to say that I'm good-looking. They rub their hands and chuckle over it. They think I should be hurried to the altar to save the drain on Uncle Thaddeus's purse."

"It never occurred to me before," I said with reflection, "that people figure that way. They'll be terribly disappointed. The old man has fifteen nephews or nieces or their heirs. That means that out of every hundred that

he spends on you there will be about six dollars and sixty-seven cents less coming to my father or, in the event of his death, about two dollars and twenty-two cents less coming to me. Now at that rate, my dear lady, the old man can give you quite a little money before I begin to feel the pinch of it. I'm afraid that you haven't persuaded me that I should be jealous."

Rhoda was very amused. "A mind that works like yours would probably never be jealous over things like this," she said.

"You mean I haven't got sense enough."

"People with your kind of mind never have sense enough. You're always trying to get through life on pure reason, and you'd have to have a terrible lot of that stuff to get across the street with it."

"Thanks awfully for the compliment. But I do think that nobody feels badly about you. After all it would be absurd of Uncle Tad not to educate you."

"Every penny of it will be paid back!"

"Nonsense, you don't think the old man knows the difference, do you? You mustn't think of paying back. Who wants you to pay back anyway?"

"I must pay it back some day," she said with a definiteness that quite overruled me. "Somehow, if not to him, at least to the family in some way or another. I can't take it as my right, as you think I should, because I hate the family, hate all these parties, hate it rich and poor, hate my own home, my own table, my own pillow! I want to do it for my own sake. I want to pay them back in their own coin; and then I'll be free, quite free. Do you understand?"

It is hard for me now to admit that I was thoroughly shocked by all this, but I was then only four and twenty and there is no sense in trying to persuade myself that I stood up against her without wincing. She was sitting in

one corner of a sofa and I in the other; her face, during her last remarks, became intense, her hands tugged at her handkerchief so that it began to tear under the strain. I got up, put my hands in my pockets and leaned against the arm of the sofa, avoiding her eyes. I thought she was going to cry at any moment, probably because my own throat was lumping on me a bit uncomfortably.

"I hate this Boston life," she concluded.

"You know I thought I perceived a flash of hatred at the table when I was luckless enough to speak of your appearance. There is no reason that I can see for hatred like this. If you had observed my mood at dinner you would not have got angry then; and I'm sure that much of this sweeping hatred that you have for Boston and its unfortunate inhabitants would disappear if your observation were a little fairer and a little more frequent." At last I faced her again.

"I'm afraid I made a mistake," she said. "In trying to explain to you why I hate everything, I've only made it worse!" She paused a moment and her expression shifted from pride to apprehension and back to pride again. "I'm sorry I spoke to you anyway," she added, "you're one of them."

I glanced down the hall into the billiard room, the door of which was wide open. Shouts of laughter, voices speaking in praise or blame, and the clicking of ivory balls filled the air; but neither the picture nor the sound included anything of my own generation. My pink, bald father stood bending over his cue, his eloquent face absorbed in a study of the quality of his half-burnt cigar. Uncle Tad stood near him, his red eyes bright with liquor; what could be seen of his cheeks through his uneven beard suggested, by their slow movement, the secret consumption of a morsel of plug. Both of them seemed to be listening to a stout old lady with white hair, a lorgnette, and a piece

of fur over her shoulders; the black beads that composed the outer surface of her dress caught the light and reflected the swelling of her deflated bosom. The balls crashed; there was some talk and my father advanced to the table.

Turning to Rhoda, I said: "So you think I'm one of them, do you? That's hardly a compliment after what you said about hating us all."

"Aren't you?" she asked, almost softening.

"I'm related to them, and tied up with them pretty generally socially and so far as property is concerned. All the same, I'm a bit the way you are, too. I'm self-sufficient and I like to feel elbow room." We were about to be interrupted by my brother Hallam. I thought I could see in his eyes that he wanted to convey to me that he thought I was spending too much time with the Lispenyard girl. "Let me come and see you soon," I added before he quite reached us. "I should like to have a long walk with you."

That night my father and I sat alone in the library, both of us trying to live down the disadvantages of having dined in the middle of the day when we were accustomed to dine in the evening. We had sat in silence for some time pretending to read, when my father got up and fetched himself a highball, following which, as an afterthought, he poured one out for me.

"That big brother of yours," he said, when he had drained his first glass, "thinks that you spent too much time with the Lispenyard girl to-day, but I told him that I don't think you spend too much time with any woman."

"Did you like her, father?" I asked absent-mindedly as I sipped my whisky with youthful caution. Then, remembering to whom I was speaking, I added: "Don't you think she's getting to be a sweet-looking young woman?"

The old gentleman always preferred the latter rendering of the question. He took off his glasses and put them with his book on the arm of his chair. "I really haven't seen her," he said; "she doesn't give you a chance. She's active and nervous; she has no repose. There's a sort of hostility about her."

My father, when he permitted himself to admire women, would do so as though they were of the plastic arts. It was the façade that appealed to him. I was not surprised by his antipathy to Rhoda's restlessness. What struck me was his being vaguely aware of her rebellion.

"She'd be a poor one in politics," he concluded, taking up his book again, "there's no give and take to her."

That year Rhoda and I saw a good deal of each other. We became fast friends. I was enjoying my fellowship and it was fun, on our long walks together, to see if I could not make Rhoda's freshman studies more stimulating and interesting, and less full of profitless drudgery, than mine had been. Some of the prevailing methods of study that most people considered antiquated, I thought not antique at all but simply conspicuously and contemporaneously stupid. In these efforts, however, I made little headway, for the torrents of opposition were such that I was pleased to back out. Rhoda resented what she thought meddling in her affairs, and her forceful resentment has made me, to this day, cautious in attacking or even disturbing, in a personal way, the complacent and impenetrable conventionality of youth.

"I'm so glad," she said once, while we were returning from an escapade the nature of which I no longer remember, "that I let fly at you Thanksgiving Day. It was all wrong of me, but if I hadn't done it life would be so very different for me now." Thus Rhoda would occasionally pay tribute to our friendship. She rather liked my standing between the two worlds, the one she desired to flee and

the one she was not yet ready to enter; it was chiefly my mind to which she manifested instinctive and intolerant resistance. Convinced, however, of the sincerity of my friendship, she permitted herself to receive my attentions without protest. She had given up living at home and had a room at the college dormitory. I had hoped that this would appease her scorn of her relatives and what she called naively "Boston life", but if anything it added to it. "I can never go back now," she would say, "I can never live in those conditions again. When I finish at college I'm going West. I want to earn my own living and be free to do as I please."

"The West is a good place to be free with an ax or a horse," I ventured, "but if it's real freedom that you want the East has more to offer."

Unwilling to discuss our work together, we began discussing ourselves a good deal, which led to our becoming preoccupied with each other. By spring I had fallen in love with Rhoda, and being still young and inexperienced I suffered the torments of hell. Later in life I have suffered from the same cause and had the same symptoms, but there was nothing as outrageous as the blindness and consciousness of dangerous ignorance that overwhelmed me at twenty-four. To Rhoda this was incomprehensible. She was not ready to be loved. She wanted companionship and admiration. She liked to startle me, to fill me with awe, to keep me thrilled by her vitality.

One May evening we walked slowly toward the country through Brattle Street, Cambridge. The lilacs were out in profusion and their soft fragrance carried through the damp air.

"They asked me to-day whether I should accept an offer to join the staff at Arlington when I'm through with the fellowship," I said. "I suppose I can count on Arlington for a few years anyway."

"Why do you stay there?" she asked.

"I like it, Rhoda—philosophy, I mean."

"I suppose there should be a few philosophers in the world," she said hopelessly.

"Fiddlesticks!" I said. "Why should there? For people to laugh at them? I want you to know me as I really am, Rhoda. I don't really care whether philosophy or philosophers are kindly permitted to exist by the divine grace of an industrial civilization or not. I do it because I like it, because I like nothing better. I despise the way every trifle nowadays has to be examined to see whether it's of value to the state. I'm going on with my studies because I love them, and I don't much care whether I benefit or harm anyone by doing it. You, who are forever grabbing for freedom, should certainly understand that!"

"I don't, Lee," she said. "I demand freedom only to be able to do what I think is right, and I think it's imperatively right to be of some use in the world."

"I don't care whether I am or not," I said.

"Then why do you figure on staying at the University? Why don't you be a philosopher and just sit?"

It was a fair question, difficult to answer. "It's a compromise of a sort, my staying on. Sometimes I think it's low of me because I don't really believe in it, but there are some advantages that I think justify it, if it needs any justification. I know of no other way to pursue my work and at the same time keep in touch with people. I prefer not teaching, but the disintegrating effect upon my personal character that might result from complete isolation would be more than I could stand. It's an absurd state of affairs, but I don't suppose there's a single philosopher in the United States who is not a professor of it. It's the only way a philosopher can purchase respectability."

"Well, what's the difference?"

"The difference to me is that I like respectability."

"I loathe it," she said scornfully.

Such a difference of opinion was characteristic of the friendship that we had at that time. Rhoda's disgust with life as it surrounded her in girlhood was sweeping, but in her judgments upon particular matters she was conventional to a fault. We walked along in silence and presently came to some lots at the end of the street; breaking through these a short distance, we found a stout rock beneath some trees. Here I persuaded Rhoda to sit down on my coat, and I squatted upon the grass.

"Rhoda," I said, "you must know that I've fallen in love with you."

"I was beginning to be suspicious of it," she admitted.

"I want you to marry me."

"I don't want to marry you, Lee; or anybody else for that matter."

"Should you consent to marry if you loved me?" I asked.

"I doubt it," was all she said.

"Why not?"

"I don't want to marry for years and years, probably never. First of all I want to pay back what I owe to the family, and then I want to look around for myself."

"You owe nothing, Rhoda. There is nothing to keep you from finishing at college, and your imaginary debts could be very easily paid, if that means anything to your conscience."

"No, I shouldn't be able to marry you. You're so funny!" She seized my head in her hands and kissed my hair. Then, pressing me to her, she leaned over and kissed my forehead. She was touched by my emotion. "You're a sweet thing," she added. "I might be able to love you, but marry you—never!"

I took her in my arms and kissed her. Later it seemed to me that that was the moment when I began loving

Rhoda. It took me some time before I could control my voice sufficiently to speak.

"You are going to make life hard for yourself. You might find that in trying to make life dearer for me you made it happier for yourself. I should try to do the right thing for you, Rhoda," I concluded.

"I know, I know, we should be like all the others! It's too awful to think of! Besides, you don't really love me!"

"You're the only girl I ever thought I loved. What do you know about love anyway? You've never experienced it."

"You're not ambitious enough, Lee!" This came quite unexpectedly. The irrelevancy of the remark was striking to me even in my ecstatic condition; and I laughed, laughed very heartily, and my amusement, relieving as it did the tension of the moment, expanded beyond control.

"You're not," she shouted over the racket that I made. "You know you're not!" I stopped laughing and saw that I had hurt her feelings.

"I'm sorry I laughed, Rhoda. I didn't mean to. What I really wanted to do was to cry. It was quite hysterical of me. Please forgive me."

"I meant what I said," she said bitterly.

"Well, the objects of ambition, as most men and women see them—and that's what you meant, my dear—do not attract me."

"And you suffer from poverty of emotion."

"Are you so much richer yourself? What have you to offer in the way of emotion?"

"But you're the best friend a girl ever had."

"Well then, let's walk back." It was as unpleasant a walk as I can remember. The lilacs, adding to the sweetness and softness of the evening, and the lights of so many distant homes set back just far enough from the

road for privacy, seemed to say at every step: "We are not for you."

As we neared Cambridge, Rhoda took my arm; her hand slipped gently into mine. "I've been horrid to you," she said softly, "and you've been so terribly good to me. I don't want you to think that I don't respect you, because I do, very much indeed. I think you're an awfully fine man, but I don't know why I think so."

I said nothing and we walked on in silence until we reached the place where we usually said good-bye. She took her arm away and resting her hand on the little gate that marked the path to the house where she stopped, she looked me full in the face.

"I think, Lee," she said with deliberation, "that you represent, to me, the triumph of mind over matter!"

I saw very little of Rhoda before my wedding, which occurred about three months after this meeting. Then, as is usual after a man marries, I found it impossible to preserve an old friendship and she dropped out of my life completely. Through the accidents of misfortune and unhappiness, and my natural propensities for aloofness and solitude, I lost track of Rhoda for a number of years. When we did meet again it was hard for me to overcome my reminiscent impression of her, a girl of eighteen, still with a suggestion of rawboned childhood, but with the promise of a beautiful womanhood, a girl full of pride and resentment, eager, ungenerous, unsympathetic, unemotional except in hate. She was a girl who never forgave the evil she found about her and refused to compromise with it, whose highest ambition was liberty and the ability to raise a small sum of money that would ease her mind of the humiliation of not having sprung into the world a free and independent woman.

CHAPTER III

No matter how a man may drift away from the associations of his youth, some experiences, habits, or customs drag him back to it forcibly and unexpectedly. Funerals have that faculty, and weddings; but, while I can refuse invitations to the latter, it is difficult not to do one's family homage on the occasion of death, and more than difficult for me because, now that the clergyman is no longer as fashionable as he once was, I find that the professor of philosophy, especially when he occupies a sanctified chair such as mine, is not infrequently chosen as funeral orator. I refuse most, but I must admit that I feel a drear pleasure now and then in the few where I do assist, though I am not addicted to funerals neurotically as was Gladstone, for instance, whose passion for them seems only to have been satisfied by his own. Perhaps the real reason why I like them is that I never speak more than thirty minutes, can say about what I please, and have the satisfaction of an audience that never heckles, that offers no grimacing faces, that asks no questions in order to exploit its own cleverness, and never tries to find out what the lecturer doesn't know. My text is always the same, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?", and I try to attain a sonorousness of prose that would seem affected in a lecturer on my own subject.

In 1908 I addressed the mourners of the late Mrs. Amos Lispenyard, whose husband had died in 1906. Missing Rhoda, I asked my brother Hallam, who had managed the old lady's estate, why she had not come East, and I was

shocked to hear that she had pneumonia. A month later she wrote, chiefly to thank me for my letter, and I assumed that she was quite well again.

My brother told me that Mrs. Lispenyard's last years had been painful, but that the assistance that she had received from Rhoda had helped very materially. And Rhoda, he said, had met her mother's debts with a promptness that amounted to heroism when considered in the light of her slender means.

The following year I met the family again, this time at the funeral of my great-uncle Thaddeus Collamore. On receiving a copy of his will—he kindly left me his library, which, I must say, gratified me chiefly as a mark of esteem—I was pleased to see that he had thrown over the family tradition of equal distribution and left the bulk of his estate to my cousin Rhoda. Though it did not reach the appraisals that had been made in the imaginations of his nieces and nephews for the previous quarter century, it was a sizable legacy, one that would permit Rhoda to live pretty much as she pleased and travel where she liked.

The winter following, Rhoda came East, and I met her for the first time in seven years. The circumstances of our coming together were involved in a good deal of nonsense which can best be explained by beginning at the bottom of it. Absurd as it may seem, the story actually begins with a few trifling incidents proceeding from the way in which I chance to go about my business habitually, and I shall have to take up what would appear to be a digression naturally to discover these small matters that finally brought us together again.

My method of procedure in Phil. 163a (Religion and Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century) varies, of course, with the number and capacity of my students. While still a lecturer in 1904, I gave that course for the first time, and one hundred and fifty ladies and gentlemen sat for it.

Knowing only too well the standard of scholarship and character at the university, the numerical strength with which my call was answered dismayed me. It could only mean that people thought me an easy-going sort. Of course it would have been simple to maintain this popularity and even stiffen up a bit year by year by encouraging this class. For the tutoring schools could have counted on seventy-five out of my hundred and fifty, and devoted their master minds to priming my weaker students for examinations. The tutors can get boys ready for any examination in two weeks, except the first, and I therefore brought this first class like lambs to the slaughter. I gave one A, which was by chance given to Mr. O'Flarity Child, of whom we shall hear more anon, six B's, twenty-seven C's, two D's, and to the remaining one hundred and fourteen, a bare-faced F.

This created something of a scandal. In fact it was the only time that the president saw fit to remonstrate with me. He urged with some justice that it was not the part of the youngest lecturer at the university to start raising the academic standards with a guillotine; secretly, however, he was pleased with what I had done, and I had accomplished my purpose. It was never necessary for me to offend the authorities in this particular again.

The next year I had only ten students, and as I go on I average about twelve in each course. They are usually the best students at the university; they never prime for their examinations at the tutoring schools, and they almost always give presentable papers. I am usually thought to be a man of incredible severity and peculiarity, and the professional tutors guarantee no one that he may take my courses with safety. Whatever the benefits of this system may be, it has one regret for me. Many of the best students are wretchedly poor and work for scholarships. Now O'Flarity Child is the only man on record to get

an A from me, and these stipend hunters avoid my courses because they fear that I might wreck their material fortunes. I may thus have lost some of the most inspiring students that come to us.

In the year of which I speak, 1910, I had a full baker's dozen of courageous souls. I lectured to them formally twice a week, Mondays and Wednesdays at two-thirty. Sometimes we met on Fridays for discussions, and it happened that this year I chanced to be slightly interested in phonetics. Going over my cards in September I noticed that each student came from a different state, and in order to sharpen my own observation I referred to each student geographically. "Will the lady from Wisconsin please tell us, in as few words as possible, what was meant by 'the enlightenment'?" Or, "Will the gentleman from Georgia please define for us 'religious fanaticism', assuming of course that the phrase has a meaning in his estimation?" "But the lady from Rhode Island objects," and so on.

These conferences, however, I reduced to a minimum and toward the end of the semester gave but one in the course of two months. They were good for me but they bore the students, most of whom are by nature neither talkative nor argumentative. It does not interest me to purge their minds more than once a year, but in order to give them some notion of what they shall have to contend against on that occasion, I give, at the mid-years, a brief written examination of about four or five hours. I criticize these papers fully and return them with extremely low grades but with the encouraging reflection that it is merely a practice quiz, not a matter of record, and that there is nothing to prevent any student from doing creditably in the course unless it is his natural limitation or his complacent lack of ambition.

As I said, that year I did not once refer to a student by name, having set my heart on learning to recognize each

by the precise sound of his local dialect, and in order to complete the experiment I made a point of not removing my reading glasses at lectures, which had the effect of rendering me blind for all practical purposes.

This affectation, it is only fair to say, had a secondary cause. The year previous two blase students, one a lady and one a gentleman, had a depressing effect upon my discourse by their clever play of facial expression. It is my failing perhaps that little things sometimes distress me out of proportion. The young lady would gaze adoringly upon me with calf-like eyes, heaving her bosom the while. How the pathos of those eyes did insult the human spirit! Whenever I made an effort to lighten the burden of my abstraction with a concrete figure of speech or a suggestion of humour, she would respond with such contortions of hysterical laughter that I feared for her balance. The youth, on the other hand, looked at me with a contemptuous tolerance; he gave me to understand by his elevated eyebrows and blinking lids that for him to follow my mind was only difficult because of the vast tediousness that it perforce involved. At least once during the course of each lecture he would knit his brows, purse his lips, and turn his face deliberately to the windows. He would then appear to remain lost in thought for ten or fifteen minutes, giving an occasional glance of sharp annoyance at the lecturer. Then he would relax, give me his attention, and regard me placidly. The eyebrows would shoot up again and a smile would steal over his lips.

The simplicity with which he would pick up the threads of my argument seemed to annoy me quite as much as the young lady's extraordinary mixture of intelligence and imbecility. He gave me a brilliant examination which proved on minute study to be something of a hoax. In the extent of his knowledge and the expression of it I had no complaint; but I found his logic vile both in theory and

practice, and I took great pleasure in applying my rule that students are supposed to know their rudiments of logic before they come to me. That is, I explained, what Phil. 13 and Phil. 26 are for. On failing he went to the dean and remonstrated in vain. He alleged that for the university to accept the same fees for my courses as others was to accept money under false pretenses, and that sending out catalogues with my courses noted down involved the offense of using the mails to defraud. If he had suggested as much on his paper, I might have credited him with enough logic to carry him over the no-man's land between F and D. The hysterical young lady, I must admit, came through. She knew logic and despised it; and, working herself into a pitch of excitement, produced on her examination paper an eloquent assertion of the superiority of the mystic mind, one of the best I have ever read.

All this, however, is mentioned merely to explain how, as a playful experiment, partly to defend myself against unpleasant personalities and partly to learn to judge accents better, I happened to affect reading glasses for lecturing and to refer to my students geographically. In going over the practice examinations at the mid-years, I had recourse to the roll for the first time, and great was my surprise in finding that Rhoda Lispenyard made one of my serious-minded baker's dozen.

I was at home in Belmont when I made the discovery. There was no use in telephoning because I did not have any idea where she lived; so I wrote a hasty note, begging her pardon profusely for not having recognized her, and asking if I might have lunch with her the next day. This I sent with my chauffeur to the university office, and asked him to bring me back her address.

I found myself seized with excitement quite against my will, and of a sudden possessed of an unruly temperament

wholly foreign to my nature. I didn't like my coat but must ring for my smoking jacket in the middle of the afternoon; when Jenkins brought my tea it appealed to me no more than so much dishwater; and I must have whisky and soda. Long before dinner I was thoroughly upset.

Finally I went back to my desk and pulled out her paper. I carried it over to the fireplace and sat down to read it again. I persuaded myself that it was childish of me to be excited, that I had no love for Rhoda, that I made game of myself. But she was the only woman who had any real place in my life, and the sudden change from reminiscence to reality was in itself enough to quicken my pulse. I had often wondered, in the six or seven years previous, in what way my life would have differed if she had accepted me.

I had never ceased being fond of her, though I certainly did not love her as I once did. One thing was fairly certain, Rhoda had exerted a considerable influence on my life, and one of such permanence that I do not see how it can ever be effaced. It is my belief, and I state this only as a matter of personal opinion that I do not know how to go about proving, that when a man's first love is a vivid affair, he goes through life feeling attracted to women who have some line, colour, form, some physical or even mental characteristic that belonged to the first. All the women to whom I have been attracted have had something that has drawn me back to Rhoda. And infallibly I quarrel with them as I did with her. There is always the resistance, the demand for freedom, the wish to be let alone, the desire to go on with life uninterrupted by me. There was in my picture of Rhoda that night something that had not toned down; I thought that her feeling for her family, her great aloofness, her vast pride, and her emotion that knew no softening, all had been so strong as to be permanent. She had been capable of cruelty, but capable also

of much courage and self-reliance, decision and force of character.

I knew that those qualities that I had admired in Rhoda were the qualities that even then attracted me in other women, and the odd fatality in it was the fact that the women I have loved have never cared two straws for me. Only the feeble-minded and erratic, such as the girl who distressed me so the year before, were in any way attracted by me.

With Rhoda's paper still in my hands, my reflection was cut short by the impulse to read it again. "Here," I kept saying to myself, "here in your hands is the girl you were willing to marry." But my reading of it a second time did not give me any satisfaction.

We have at the university a large number of Western spinsters, teachers by profession, who come to us, I regret to say, for higher degrees. They don't really like to study but they do it industriously as a matter of business. These girls, and there are plenty of men like them, are numerous enough to be recognized as a type here, for they have many traits in common. Without knowing whose paper it was, I had set Rhoda down as one of these. Her premises were too broad, and her failure to restrict or qualify them had made her conclusions platitudinous and dull. Her interest, too, was excessively pedagogical; it had no delight in knowledge; what made a strong appeal was the mere act of passing information from one book or lecture to another lecture or pupil. This is what I had written down on the back:

If on your final examination you take as much effort in trying to give plausible answers, as in this you have taken in trying to say what you wrongly thought I wished you to say, you may get a B instead of a C. The particulars from which I generalize are noted in the context.

You are sound enough but you are so broad that you become innocuous. I think I perceive a dash for freedom. Unfortunately it is mostly dash, and it collides with your desire

to pacify the instructor. The consequence is that I find a little nose-thumbing between the lines. Be as independent as you please, but there is no merit in throwing dirt upon me if you are going to admit the justice of my views of the Eighteenth Century.

Among some qualities that I consider highly commendable, your mind has two characteristics that I think worthy of your serious attention. The first is your conventionality. Do you use Mr. Shay's excellent pamphlet, How to Pass Any Course of Study? *Secondly, your mind has the brute force, vigour, sweep, and exquisite impatience of a well-bred horse. Your paper makes me feel as though I were one of the wise men of the East, traditionally thought to have set out slowly upon the backs of camels to do homage at the cradle of Jesus Christ. Should you have taken a motorcycle? Let us have a little less sand in our eyes. Suppleness, deftness, precision, infinite patience, sensibility to logically constructed statements: these are qualities of mind that I should like to see you cultivate, as long as you do not confuse them with qualities of character. They are what the decadent East should offer the virile West.*

L. S.

My second impression did not differ enough for me to add anything to what I had written. It was nothing brilliant and nothing damning; a bit too breezily schoolish, perhaps. After all, she had been teaching for nearly seven years, and that had very likely meant privation to her in keeping alive her interest in subjects of this kind. Certainly it had required a good deal of courage for her to step into Phil. 163a; and the practice quiz seemed to indicate a real, if not altogether original, interest in what was being considered. Perhaps my criticism was a bit too strenuous; doubtless a spoken word or two would put a smile into it.

I put my boy to bed and then came down to dinner. The *Boston Transcript* was my only guest. Greggory returned and reported Miss Lispenyard out, but I was presently roused out of a nap by a telephone call.

"Professor Seebohm?" the voice asked.

"Mr. Seebohm," I replied.

"Rhoda Lispenyard."

"Really? Are my apologies accepted?"

"Of course they are."

"Shall I expect you to-morrow?"

"Expect the lady from Wisconsin." I could hear her merry laughter.

"I'll call for you at one."

"Please do."

Rhoda had taken rooms in a pleasant dwelling not far from the university, and I saw her emerge from the door just as we drove up. As she hurried to meet me I thought I observed the same restlessness, the same nervous eagerness. She was far more attractive than she had been as a girl; her eyes were more determined than ever, and they had lost a wistful sadness that I remembered about them. She wore a beautiful squirrel coat and a brilliant green sport cap.

"Rhoda!" I cried as I jumped down.

"Lee," she said, taking my hand, "the only friend I have in the East, and I thought you spurned me!"

"Why didn't you let me know that you were here?" I asked. "I should have thrust myself at your feet at once." I signified to Greggory that we were going back to Belmont; Rhoda and I got in, and I slammed the door.

"I was in town a month without hearing from you and then I took your course, thinking it would revive an old acquaintance. Then what did you do but call me 'the lady from Wisconsin'! And after that what could I be expected to do? I swear I haven't been able to catch your eye once in thirty-five lectures. But I must admit that the course isn't as bad as I feared it would be!"

"I haven't looked them over yet this year, Rhoda. But I ought to have recognized your voice in spite of your affected Wisconsin dialect. Why didn't you talk your old Boston to me?"

"I hate it!"

"Well, it was terribly decent of you to stay in my course!"

"I should have been a poor sport to quit."

On the way out we talked of family matters with the avidity of thoroughly responsible domestic souls. We bemoaned the death of kings and we summed up the general condition of the family with criticism untempered with mercy. "You see," I said, "I haven't met a soul since Uncle Tad's funeral, and I had no idea that you were here. Did Hallam know?"

"Of course."

"It was brotherly of him not to tell me, wasn't it?"

"Forgive my saying it, Lee, but I find you in just about the same position that I was in when I left for the West. Only instead of going into hysterics of hate and pulling up your stakes, you retire in state to Belmont."

"I don't hate them, Rhoda, I'm a family man."

"Rubbish, you're a hermit. You never see a soul. I have it from Hallam."

"What does he know, the jackass?"

"Bravo!" cried Rhoda. We were at the door.

Something in my manner that morning must have betrayed my anxiety when I ordered lunch for two. Jenkins ran out bare-headed to open the door of the machine, something that I have many times forbidden him to do, as he is now well over seventy; and my son stood ready to open the door as we mounted the steps of the porch.

"I want you to meet my boy, Rhoda," I said, taking off my things. "Went, this is your cousin, Rhoda, of whom you have heard me speak."

"Lee," shouted my guest, "Lee, I never knew!"

"Not Lee," I said, "Wentworth is his name."

Rhoda kissed the boy, much to his happiness, before he had time to say a word. "Why didn't you tell me that you had a boy, Lee?" I think there were tears in her eyes; she held Wentworth to her for a moment in order that he should not perceive them.

"I didn't know you'd be interested," I said with embarrassment. Wentworth, released, took a few steps backward and gazed upon my guest with silent awe while she, recovered from her momentary shock, looked at me with amazement bordering upon disgust. I felt that I had been perfectly natural in not speaking of the child. Rhoda, flaring up with her ready hostility, took the fact as though she had suddenly revealed me as a bank robber. Wentworth, as usual, stepped into the breach.

"Father," he said fairly cautiously, "I wish you'd bring a lady home with you more often."

"The darling!" Rhoda exclaimed.

"I'll do the best I can for you," I said.

Jenkins announced lunch. "Master Wentworth has been served, sir," he added.

"Well, it's time for your nap, Went. I'll see you at three o'clock and hear your lessons, and you may see Cousin Rhoda again before she goes." My son scrambled up the stairs without a word. "Come," I said to Rhoda, "we'll have lunch in the library; I haven't used the dining room six times since I moved in."

"He's a fine boy," said Rhoda, furtively trying to catch another tear.

"I think so, too," I admitted. "But I didn't mean to shock you. I thought that it was generally known that I had a son. You see, I hate to tell people that I have the finest boy on earth and then have them think that he's just an average boy when they meet him. That's the only reason I have for not talking much about him. Don't you think that parents talking on the subject of their children are a bit tedious? I do. Why were you so moved?"

"Out of pity, I suppose. I had a sudden revulsion of feeling."

"You think him piteous, do you?" I asked.

"Yes," she said.

The soup was laid upon the table. I waited a moment for Jenkins to go out of the room, and then I asked:

"Now tell me why this perfectly healthy child of seven strikes you as an object for pity. Why are you touched by the sight of him?"

"He looked pathetic," was all she could think of to say.

"Takes after his father?"

"There's something in that," she admitted with a laugh. "He needs warmth. You're too cold to bring up a child."

"Really? You always thought me cold, didn't you, Rhoda?"

"Yes."

"Well, given the personality that I've got, I do the best I know how for him."

"I'm afraid I've been a bit nasty. I don't believe you know how to take care of a child. The idea of it was too horrible to me! A boy like that shouldn't have a nap in the afternoon, for example."

"It's a good system, and does him no harm. It makes him fresh for his lessons and it gives me a very quiet hour after lunch."

"It's just too awful!" she said, and I felt that what really troubled her mind was that the boy had no mother. "Doesn't he ever play with the other little boys in the street?"

"Not yet. He will by and by. But, Rhoda, if you like that boy I wish you would see a lot of him. I should like him to have the influence of a woman."

"I'd love to."

"Perhaps I can delegate some of his instruction to you; we'll see how it works out. Meanwhile let's go on with our lunch, and please tell me about yourself and what you did in the West."

"Taught school. Taught in a young ladies' finishing school. It was ghastly!"

"Not really?"

"No? Well, you should try it."

"They finish them up without my subject, don't they?"

"They don't finish them up, Lee; they tie them up, bind them up like the feet of Chinese women."

"I wish we could pick up where we left off, Rhoda. Can't you give me a story of it? As I remember it you went West on a free and independent excursion."

"And because I wanted to get away and start paying my debts."

"Was there much in the idea that freedom is to be had in a far country?"

"Well, I paid my debt and gained my freedom, but I gained it only at its own cost. You see, I merely shifted everything from Boston to Shady Hill, Wisconsin. The real freedom was the act of getting there. Once there I had to sell out to make a living."

"I was afraid of it," I said.

"You have no idea how horrible it is out there. The solitude is appalling. There was no social life whatever. There was no opportunity to escape from the most absurd philistinism. You had to lock yourself in your room. And my work made me so tired that when I did lock myself in, it was usually to correct papers or throw myself into bed."

"I have known," I said, "that teaching in small, private schools may be damned unpleasant."

"This job certainly was."

"And now," I asked, "what now, Rhoda?"

"After my mother died my one idea was to hold down that job until I had saved enough money to go somewhere and study, or take a year off any way I wanted. Then when Uncle Tad's estate was settled there was no longer any need for me to hold down that job, so I tore up my stakes and came East. I want to take a year to rest and

study; and then I'm going to decide what I want to do, and go ahead and do it."

"You always were a determined sort, Rhoda. Have you any idea what you want to do? That night that we parted you seemed to have a clearness of vision about yourself, and I wonder if you have that still."

"I did see that night. I'm glad that I did what I did. Not that a lot hasn't happened that I didn't foresee. If it had occurred to me that a teacher in a finishing school could sink to the level of abject slavery, and become illiterate through isolation, I'd probably not have had the courage to do it. I never dreamed that a woman like me would cling to a job that she thought despicable through fear of losing it."

"I don't think it's altogether fair to be so severe on yourself, Rhoda," I said. "You had somebody else to consider; you were living hand-to-mouth, and you really couldn't be expected to be independent."

"I look upon the whole affair as a failure, as the first great failure of my life. Now I want to start in all over again."

We had finished lunch and amused ourselves looking over the room while Jenkins cleared the table. Rhoda lit a cigarette and ran about the room with childish pleasure. "You know," she said, "I like this ever so much more than the Senator's."

"Why?" I asked.

She didn't know, unless it was that Beacon Hill houses, and I suppose my father's was characteristic of them, reminded her too much of the setting of her childhood, whereas the Belmont house seemed to Rhoda the embodiment of myself without the trappings of a whole family tradition. We went on talking aimlessly. It gave me so much pleasure to be with Rhoda again that I sat listening to her for some time without paying any attention to what

she was saying. I wondered why it was that I had never found another friend with whom I could so enjoy myself. Suddenly I became aware that she was asking me a question.

"Do you find me more mature?" she repeated.

"Mature? In what way, Rhoda?"

"Why, in character, of course."

It was hard to answer. I had just been reflecting on how much she resembled the young girl I had known.

"It's so easy to say yes or no. What do you understand by maturity, Rhoda?" I asked.

"Am I any older, Lee?"

"Seven years," I said, counting on my fingers.

"How do you define maturity, Professor?"

"Rhoda, if you ever call me that again!"

"Define it, and I never will."

"I think that people begin to attain maturity when they scrap one set of values and one set of aims or aspirations, and take up others, as a result of some experience. I think that's what 'putting away childish things' means, and of course I exclude any imitation. Imitators are always children."

Rhoda stood straight in front of me, her hands in the broad pockets of her skirt; her cigarette, hanging out of the corner of her mouth, seemed to be a part of her roguish smile. "Now that we've learned our lessons," she said, "do you, or don't you think that I'm more mature?"

"Not especially. I think you may be nearer to it than ever before, but I think that fundamentally you're about the same. Isn't that so?"

"I don't know. I was asking in good faith."

"By the way, your paper is there. I wrote the criticism before I knew who you were, and you might look at it while we're talking of maturity."

I went over to the desk and found it on the top of the

pile. Giving it to Rhoda, I watched her as she read my remarks. Her eyes fell almost immediately, probably when she perceived the grade. Then she got flushed, got angry, but read on. Finally she threw the paper down.

"Well," she said with tension, "I'd do better not to say anything about it now. I accepted your invitation as a friend, and there isn't much sense in taking up an official matter right now. But wait till your next lecture; I'll tell you what I think of this after your next lecture."

This loss of faith shocked me. I very rarely experience hurt feelings, but I think this was one of the few times when that happened. I should not have mistaken a show of temper for a loss of faith, but I did.

"Rhoda," I said, "if you want to say anything about that paper, please say it here and now. I don't think there's anything insulting in it, and I certainly hope that there's nothing unjust about it. If you're going to learn anything in my course you will have to learn it through antagonism, not through sympathy. I'm not teaching in a finishing school; I'm lecturing to adults, and their minds can develop better in opposition to mine. Otherwise there's no excuse for not going to the library and digging it all out by research. But remember this, Rhoda, and I'm talking to you now as the Herr-Professor-Doctor and not as a friend, that this antagonism must be a struggle of minds and not of personalities. If you want a struggle of personalities I'll go right to the dean and ask him to give you credit for a half course. What I want to do is to get the men and women who study under me to develop as much intellectual resistance as they have emotional resistance."

"It seems to me," she said hotly, "that you treat me as though I were a child, only you express your feelings as no one who had any understanding of the principles of education ever would to a child." That was all she could say

for the moment; the tears welled, and she tried to keep them back.

"Wait a moment," I said, "you think your case is special. You think I have treated you with particular severity and contempt. Let's look at some of the others without noticing their names."

I took up the pile and chose one at random. "Look at this: 'Please in the future listen to my lectures and leave your notebooks at home. Otherwise you may, on the final and only examination, make me feel that I cannot give myself a passing grade.' Please take one at random, Rhoda." I held out the papers like a stack of cards. At first I thought she was going to refuse, but then she slowly put her hand out and snatched one.

"'You have great poverty of expression,'" she read, "'which makes it hard for me to comprehend what you mean to say. After much effort I reach this opinion, that your obscurity is due largely to timidity. You snow yourself in with such expressions as "it seems to me", "in my opinion", "I believe", and "it is barely possible", until you convince yourself of the futility of your mental operations. It is therefore not astonishing that you fail to convince me.'

"It's extraordinary, but there may be an idea in it that I never thought of. Do you expect these people to be helped by this kind of thing?"

"Say you're not angry any more."

"I'm not," Rhoda admitted, smiling again, "but I think you're a great fool."

Wentworth was coming down the stairs with his books and paper. He walked seriously into the library and regarded us with patient curiosity. I asked Rhoda to watch us go through with our lessons, and just before we had finished, I asked her to go on while I went to the garage to get the machine ready to take her back to Arlington.

That evening when I saw Went put to bed, I asked him how he liked reciting his lessons to Rhoda.

"I don't like it at all," he said; "that's your work, father." This remark came with the finality that prevented me from sending him to school.

"Well," I asked, "how do you like Cousin Rhoda when she is not hearing your lessons?"

"Too magic," he said, sleepily.

CHAPTER IV

Shortly after this meeting I had the courage to remove my reading spectacles and began feeling more intimate with the membership of Phil. 163a. They were a good-looking crew, and it gave me pleasure to observe what I could of their reactions, for there was no one of the type disconcerting to me by virtue of intemperate response. When I returned the papers, which I have already discussed parenthetically at too great length, consternation was epidemic. Most of the students shared the feeling of Miss Lispenyard and struggled with their tempers for a week or two. A number of theories sprang up to account for the criticism that I had put forth with so much pain, and there seemed to be two principal schools of thought. If I judged rightly by their whispering and expressions the stronger of these by far held that I did not really mean what I said. My criticism, they thought, had been composed for its own sake; I liked my eccentricity. This side took aid and comfort from Rhoda, and I recall reflecting that it was singularly like a relative and the friend of one's youth to refuse to take a man seriously. Those of the other camp thought me a hunter, bent upon filling my bag, more willing to play fair than not, but, rather than come home empty-handed, ready to ensnare my students into philosophical error by foul means. They evidently thought that my criticism was meant to frighten them out of their senses so that I might flunk them with a clear conscience.

In my estimation that particular class boasted of not one first-rate student; and it is only just to add that, in such

of their opinions as ever became known to me, none of them thought that that course boasted a first-rate instructor.

Of some of Miss Lispenyard's colleagues, I have a dim remembrance. There was an emaciated, wizened old gentleman of twenty-two, Havemeyer Jones, alleged to be precocious, if you please, by the head of the department of Indic Philology. Jones evidently felt the presence of women in the course as a gratuitous and distracting imposition, and he treated them all to an ostentatious condescension, except Miss Lispenyard, toward whom he felt admiration tempered only by a sense of his own superior scholarship, an attitude which a number of times so nearly fetched him a clout in the face that I held my breath.

"If Miss Lispenyard could be persuaded to express her views on this subject," he said one day at a conference, "I'm sure we should all be interested."

"Does that provoke anything in you, Miss Lispenyard?" I asked after pausing as long as I could out of respect for her temper.

"Silence!" she fairly snorted.

Upon the whole their faces were proud, clear, empty, and handsome. They had a sort of comradeship based upon the common assumption of injured innocence. They gazed with certain but patient superiority. One man had a fine moustache, another dressed like a dandy and petted himself for it, and still another thought constantly of his shoes and seemed never to wear the same pair twice. Two or three met my eyes with interest that sometimes seemed antagonistic and at other times speculative. Among the women there was one with short, curly hair that would not stay put; she was capable of using her mind actively but usually came to lectures too tired to listen. Her brilliance and her industry led me to recommend her for a travelling fellowship. I thought that perhaps on the voyage

to Europe or on a train somewhere she might find a little time to stop and think.

But Rhoda interested me more than any of the others, and to this day I do not know whether it was because of my feeling for her or because of some intrinsic quality of the student that raised her above the others. Possibly it was due to both reasons. It stimulated me to have her in the room. I would take more care in the preparation of a lecture, rely less upon notes, and try to finish up the product with rhetorical economy. I would try also to use the type of contrast or figure that would raise her eyebrows a little higher, that would make her lips meet with more firmness and her smile more satirical, or that would cause her to laugh frankly. No wonder Mr. Jones bowed to Miss Lispenyard; she set the pace for the class.

The haunting, pathetic defensive that had aroused my sympathy for Rhoda as a child had now disappeared; the fearlessness that she also then possessed, though it came to the surface infrequently, was now in the ascendant. Her chin, which just escaped a brutal forcefulness and always prevented her from being really beautiful, had the quality of resistance. There was a great deal of determination about her face. Her lips moved with fine flexibility; they were attractive and decisive without the firmness of stupidity, the irresolution of weakness, or the heaviness of the sense. The line of her nose was fairly regular—in fact, almost perfect—and what was sensuous in her nature found expression in the unbeautiful but attractive quivering roundness of her nostrils.

Her courage was a moral quality and seemed to proceed from her vast nervous energy; it lifted her brows, it opened her lids; her gray eyes would meet you sparkling. Her wrists and fingers were unusually firm, and she rarely raised her hands above the level of her elbows. Her Western experience had left her worn and thin, but

she began to take on flesh. Rhoda threatened to become a luxurious woman, though she always escaped the suggestion of voluptuousness.

Being by nature too ready to permit myself to be dull, it made a great difference to have Rhoda constantly before me. I speedily found the others more friendly, and the gathering about my desk at the close of lectures became so persistent that I had sometimes to invite them home or to a neighbouring restaurant in order to escape the lecture room.

One day while hurrying across the campus to give a lecture in my other course, I met Rhoda wholly by chance. A few weeks of ominous silence had elapsed since we spent that quarrelsome Saturday afternoon at Belmont.

"Hello, Lee," she said, stopping.

"Why, Rhoda," I cried with obvious pleasure. "Have you a class right now?"

"No. I'm through for the day."

"Come and hear me lecture on mysticism. It's guaranteed to be harmless."

"All right," she said, "I will. I've always wanted to hear you as an outsider."

"That you can't do; it's psychologically impossible, but I should love to have you try. Afterward I'll break away as soon as I can and I'll meet you right here."

They heckled me so much during the lecture that toward the close I managed to dispel any brewing questions by assuming great haste in packing my books and papers a moment before the gong sounded. When it did I seized my bag and wraps and turned sharply on my heel. The motor was waiting and I managed to reach it just in time to open the door most gallantly for Rhoda, to the amused astonishment of the wandering students who chanced to be hard by.

"Let's run out to Belmont," I said. "Wentworth is all

excitement to see you again. He asks after you every day."

"I'd love to," said Rhoda, and then after a pause she asked, "Why don't you send him to school, Lee?"

"I can't find one where he would learn more or better than he learns at home." My answer did not satisfy my kinswoman, her objection being that I had not looked for a school sufficiently. Our conversation led naturally to other topics; we spoke of my unfitness to be a professor of philosophy, or to bring up a small boy without help from outside. Just as we neared Belmont she began in that soft, clear voice that always endeared her to me and that she always seemed to employ when what she had to say was of far less significance than the emotion that prompted her to say it:

"I was horrid to you when I was here last. If you should ask me why in your usually inquisitive way I'm sure I shouldn't be able to tell you. Your criticism shouldn't have hurt my feelings no matter how cruel it seemed because I ought to have known you and trusted you as a friend. If we're going to be friends again we shall have to be unguarded. I've always been too guarded, perhaps because my life has been too hard, and that's one of the reasons why I've had so few friends."

"Perhaps, on the contrary, Rhoda, your life has seemed hard because you've made it so with your guardedness."

"At any rate, the moment I saw you coming across the campus this afternoon, I was sorry that I'd been horrid to you."

"My dear lady," I said, "my dear lady!"

She went on, during the course of the afternoon, to explain herself to me. She had not been at her best that fall and winter; only during the last few days had she been able to enjoy life and health and breathe deeply. Not that she had been actually ill; she had simply felt

forlorn and lonely. Her release from teaching had been too unexpected, and the consequent relaxation had been too sudden and too complete for one unaccustomed to it. She would sit in her little room and look out of the window by the hour, unable to believe that the drudging duties of the boarding school did not await her. She would walk through the undeveloped streets of Arlington, thinking that in a moment she would have to take a car for South Boston, there to fit into a domestic life that teemed with hatefulness. She wanted to recall the youthful curiosity and enthusiasm she had felt years ago at Radcliffe. She wanted to feel the great relief that she felt when she first left home and went to live in a dormitory. If only she could be in love with life again; if only music or painting could move her soul as it once did. Not that she had ever hoped to practice any art, but she had at one time given herself to the arts to be taught by them.

"In those days," I said to her, "life lay before you. You had a definite purpose. Your teaching had the bad effect that it has on everyone who is not born to it, or who does not take it up as the great thing in his life. It took everything out of you and gave you nothing in return. Wait till you've been at Arlington a little longer; it will make you feel like a child again. That's the only real benefit of Arlington education."

"I wonder," she whispered incredulously.

"Have no doubts," I assured her. "I observe it from week to week. Every hour that I lecture I can see you become more responsive, more healthily nervous. And if you can do that in 163a, my dear Rhoda, how you must be picking up in more lively things?"

Later in the afternoon I decided to run my cousin back to town myself. Her unexpected warmth had aroused my acquisitiveness and I did not want to lose a minute in her

presence, so I easily invented an excuse to go and see my brother Hallam.

"I'll drive myself," I said, "I do it every now and then to keep my hand in it. Greggory was my father's man and he's getting too old to drive and much too sensitive to have anyone take his place, so I'm getting accustomed to doing it myself and letting him repair the car. Anyway, I want to see Hal on business."

We said good-bye to Wentworth, who was already having his supper.

"How do you expect me to get to sleep if you're not here?" he asked of me.

"You may stay up till I come back if you'll watch the fire and start your lessons for to-morrow."

"Come back before I get too sleepy."

"Aren't you going to say good-bye to Cousin Rhoda?" I asked.

"Good-bye, Rhoda."

"That's right," she said and kissed him. "Don't cousin me!"

We were off for a short brisk ride in the open. I had taken an extra coat for Rhoda. It was a little four-cylinder runabout that cried out pertly now and then in the cold dampness of the February evening, and the tires made the frosty ruts crackle and squeak. We let down the windshield and caught the cold air in our faces.

"It's fun," said Rhoda, but being preoccupied with the motor, for my driving always requires extraordinary concentration, I could do no more than maintain a joyful silence.

"Don't be so precious with yourself any more," I said when I set her down. "Let's be friends as we used to be."

"All right," she said, "let's."

In an hour I was at my brother's at Commonwealth Avenue.

"I say," said Hallam as he came into the library, "can't you stay for dinner? Hypatia will be down in a minute. You look in awfully good humour."

"Have to put the boy to bed."

"I always forget that you have a boy. How is Wentworth these days?"

"As well as can be expected."

"Why, has he been ill?"

"No, just young."

"Come on, stay. Can't you telephone?"

"He wouldn't go to sleep properly. He's waiting up for me and he'd be cross in the morning. No, I dropped in to ask you to increase the insurance on 899 Mass. Avenue," and we talked business for ten minutes. On the way to the door I turned to Hallam and said:

"Why don't you get Hypatia to ask Rhoda Lispenyard to dinner sometime?"

"Guess I'd better." He thought a moment and added: "You used to see more of her than anyone else in the family. Shall we ask you too?"

"Certainly."

"What made you think of it?" he asked as he opened the door.

"She takes 163a with me, and I have a suspicion that she's neglected."

"Something must be wrong if she's taking your course. I'll see if I can't counteract your influence," he shouted after me.

"Good-night, Hal," I said, putting my foot on the starter. I made a hasty meal at the club and drove home. Wentworth, lost in a bath robe of mine that had the effect of making him appear much smaller than he really was, sat sleepily before the fire, a book in one hand and a huge poker in the other. The little boy's head drooped and I

suspected that his eyelids were closed. Jenkins sat in a far corner reading his paper.

"Anything more, sir?" he asked.

"Nothing more, thank you, Jenkins."

On hearing voices Wentworth raised his head and opened his eyes.

"When did you come home, father?"

"This minute, Went. Just in time to put you to bed." Lifting him in my arms I carried him upstairs.

"Father," he said sleepily when I had tucked him in.

"Yes."

"Did you have dinner with Cousin Rhoda?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't know."

"You know an awful lot, father; I think you know more than Jenkins and even more than Greggory. But I notice more and more that when I ask you the simplest questions you say you don't know."

My impulse was to say: "Son, you ask more questions than you used to." Instead I tucked him in and opened the window in silence.

"Good-night, boy, perhaps I'll know more some day."

"Good-night, father."

Early that spring Rhoda largely recovered the vigour that she formerly possessed though it did not find expression in the same ways. She had freed herself and stepped into a new environment; she had become a very different person. And, in general, life in Boston and its suburbs had softened a good deal in those ten years, as it was to harden again into new forms and conventionalities in the next.

All at once it flashed upon her that the acquisition of means had stifled her impulse. At Radcliffe in the old days she had thought constantly and fervently on the

problem of earning her living and paying back what she thought to be a debt to the family, and that ambition had taken possession of her and become the driving power of her activity. But after her liberation, when she came east again, almost unawares she lost all purpose in life. Her studies, had she been by nature a person of a scholarly turn, might have sufficed to satisfy her need; but she never was a woman who could take up an art or a science as a professional matter, and she could not deceive herself about it.

By the first of March the late Thaddeus Collamore's estate had gone sufficiently through the slow process of probate to place in her hands cash in amounts, though not very large, yet so far exceeding anything to which she was accustomed as to bewilder her. Five or six years' salary at finishing school now appeared to be a very small fraction of her means. Always having suffered from poverty, there was in her nature a strong desire to experience the sensations of prodigality. Without ostentation and with no lack of generosity she longed to do what she wished unrestrained by motives of economy; and now, within limits much narrower than she realized, she could indulge this somewhat vulgar desire. And spend she did, in terms that made my brother Hallam, who managed the estate, whimper and urge Hypatia to hurry the dinner party that had been promised. "We must get that girl married," he would say, "before she throws away everything."

Among her earliest gifts was a typewriter for Wentworth, it being her notion that he should learn to write first upon the machine. Unfortunately for her experiment he had learned to make his letters at five and was a thorough penman on his eighth birthday when he received the machine to his great joy.

She became a tailored woman, one might almost say a smartly gowned woman. The last days of February found

her entrenched behind sealskin, and as I glanced over my spectacles I was aware that wealth became her, and I was only sorry that my uncle Tad had not been a wealthier man. Her neck and arms, usually bare these days, would nestle into a cloak that she would throw wistfully over her shoulders in the draughty hall.

Even the new and splendid wardrobe did not satisfy her desire to spread her wings in the sun. There was a new car that spring, an attractive, small gray speedster that she would drive with her own ungloved hands and silken feet to the peril of herself and others, but without much actual damage to anything but the machine itself.

With these trappings changes came into her character. Later she learned to accept the conveniences of her position as conveniences, but for the moment she was preoccupied with her toys. Her speech became affected temporarily with the slang and profanity of the road and the garage; her temper became still more hasty, though it learned to cool itself sooner. She would fall into little poses, such as that of saluting traffic officers, of joking with them when stopped, and of taking no offense at the suggestion of ribaldry that not long previously would have shocked her. She became light, gay, easily absorbed in trifles.

As this phase expanded she saw less of me, though we were excellent friends and neither of us gave up the idea of carrying on our former intimacy. Nothing in me, however, could find her interest as quickly as the garage man who changed her tire. Nor could I charm her as did, for instance, Mr. Henry Smallbox, with his lectures on the Russian novelists of the Nineteenth Century. She could never tease me as easily as the traffic officer, or even as coyly as she played Mr. Jones of Georgia when she ceased to take him seriously. His most effective compliment had been: "If all women were as stimulating as

you, Miss Lispenyard, I could be reconciled to co-education." "I looked at him," Rhoda told me later, "with my extra-special-crucify-me-without-further-notice expression and said: 'If I could only open your eyes to see that other women are so much better at this game than I am!'" She loved to tease when it was fair game, but it is only just to say that she never tweaked a fellow's whiskers unless the game was on.

It was April before my testy sister-in-law perpetrated the dinner party that I had suggested in February. She pleaded a full calendar, but her real reason was that she thought that Rhoda had neglected to observe some social attention that she considered her due. Perhaps Rhoda had failed to call, or something like that, but Hypatia may also have wished to impress her renegade brother-in-law with the imposing nature of the social life that he had deliberately abandoned.

It was not a large dinner. Besides myself and my brother there were four other gentlemen. They were men of a type; hostesses usually invited them when they were having an unmarried young woman no longer thought a debutante. They were all men of more or less established bachelorhood; one no longer called them boys and one didn't just know why. It would seem that their whole idea in life was to keep on going to just such dinners, and their game was therefore to play against the hostess and never take a serious interest in any of these seconds on the marriage market. To accomplish this without giving offense to anyone was the prerequisite of the caste, and the source of an unbroken chain of well-planned dinners.

The women present were all vaguely familiar to me. Like the men I knew them from the early days that preceded and immediately followed my marriage. I suppose that, unlike the men, each had her own reason for remain-

ing single, and I did not impugn their motives in the matter.

I thought that my hostess had clearly designed what she would have called a "lemons' party" and as I had been in a sense the instigator of the affair I did not take the compliment as gracefully as I should have. There chanced to be one figure in our family who had, from time immemorial, the universal reputation of being a bore and a sot, and of being obnoxious in general, and in particular disgusting to women. There may have been others who deserved his reputation, or at least some part of it, more than he; but Uncle Robert was traditionally with us the scapegoat of social abhorrence. So as soon as we were seated I looked up at my sister-in-law and said:

"Where's Uncle Rob to-night?"

"I don't know, Lee. Why do you ask?"

"I thought he was coming," I said, looking about the room significantly.

Rhoda got the point immediately, and Hallam laughed with annoyance. Hypatia, however, felt outraged by my remark and was silent or incoherent as long as I remained in her presence.

The conversation turned out miserably dull and I cannot remember a single line of it. Even the subjects are beyond recall, and I am not sure that there were any. Of course when a man is known to be a professor of philosophy it is futile for him to take the initiative at the table. For while people are sometimes willing to exercise their politeness by assuming a supercilious tolerance, they can rarely bring themselves to a level of graciousness where they can converse with him on terms of equality. I therefore went up to the library immediately after dinner and looked about for something to drink and something to read, and after amusing myself thus for an hour or two, I came to the conclusion that it was no longer too early to go,

and went downstairs again. As I entered the drawing room it seemed to me that a profound silence surrounded the ten or fifteen guests and, fearing that an alcoholic hallucination lay before me, I stood in the doorway pinching myself through my trouser pockets. Upon seeing me Rhoda jumped up and bending over my sister's chair began to speak privately to her. I strolled over in their direction, wondering whether I had forgot myself in the library.

"Lee," said Rhoda, swerving about, "do you mind taking me home?"

"Delighted," I said, unnaturally sleepily.

"I'm sorry you're going so soon, Rhoda," Hypatia said.

"Oh, I must," Rhoda cried, and then told an elaborate falsehood about the necessity of studying for an examination of mine on the morrow. When we were seated in the machine she said:

"63 Pinkney, Lee."

"Pinkney?"

"Yes, I've a surprise for you."

"What is it?"

"My new apartment."

"Apartment?"

"Yes, apartment."

I had not expected it. I was doubtless very old-fashioned, but even in those days young women rarely took apartments alone. The idea, however, appealed to me, and the street I thought the most attractive in Boston. By the time Rhoda told me to stop, I was all excitement.

It seemed to be the second floor of an old residence; my father could have told me who lived there during the Civil War. The room in front, where we entered, was the living room. It had a few bookshelves, a Colonial fireplace, a lounge, a gate-legged table, and one huge bay window with a gorgeous red and gold silk hanging. For-

tunately it was large enough, this room, to throw the furnishings into the background, and small enough so that you felt the intimate presence of Rhoda. It was her first room, and she was both proud and defensive about it.

"It's lovely, Rhoda," I said.

"Thanks, Lee. Let me take your things."

"This evening reminded me of so many years ago, Lee," she said when we were comfortably seated on the divan. "I used to go to a dinner like that and then go home to South Boston and cry my heart out because I was poor. Now I feel merely angry, but probably if you hadn't come home with me I'd be crying all the same. I'd be afraid that I might some day be like them myself. Don't ever let me accept another invitation," she added more to herself, I observed with regret, than to me.

"I'm afraid I'm responsible for this one," I admitted.

"You?"

"I was at the bottom of it. I wanted you to come back and meet this kind of thing on your own terms. I wanted you to be for once in your life the person sought after in this crowd. I thought it would amuse you to come back with the tables turned."

"I'm glad you did it," she said. "But once is enough. All evening I wanted to run to you and say: 'I can't stay here another minute.'"

"The pity is that Hypatia gave us a rotten party on purpose to let me know what she thinks of my having dropped out of the bunch. After all, it must have been more than poverty and unhappiness at home that made you hate us all years ago."

"I can't remember, and I don't want to. Will you have a cigarette, Lee?"

We sat smoking in silence for a moment and my eyes began stealing critically about the room as though I could find in the selection of books on her shelves or the arrange-

ment of things here and there some clue to her character that I lacked.

"Don't look at my books and things, please, Lee. I didn't ask you to come up to-night for that. I want awfully to talk seriously to you."

"What is it?" I asked, looking at her in surprise. She was determined, and her brows knitted as close as they could.

"I've reached a decision, and I came to it to-night as I sat there and watched those people. I listened to their inane conversation and thought myself so immensely superior. I laughed at them inwardly for their scrupulously restrained conventions. Well, do you think I'm any better than they are, Lee Seebohm?"

"I hope so."

"Well, I don't see why I should sit here and laugh at them."

"No, you shouldn't laugh, Rhoda. I don't know whether we're superior or not. All I can say with certainty is that I prefer your society to theirs. They bore me as they bore you, and they give me the same luxurious feeling of superiority."

"You have a right to feel superior, Lee, because you're a distinguished scholar; because, in a small way, you're a great man."

I was swept off my feet by this admission of Rhoda's. I had longed for her approbation for so long and had received nothing but very unfavourable criticism, that I wanted to seize her in my arms. But for some reason or other expression of any kind failed me, and I remember standing up and turning my back to her.

"My objection to you," she went on, "is not that you're a poor philosopher but that I have very little sympathy for a man who spends his life in that pursuit."

I turned quickly about with a smile on my lips, glad that

I had not been able to express the emotion that this remark killed. My mind seemed to reach back and find the remnant of the discussion.

"Well, it isn't fair to be so damned superior," I said. "My brother Hallam, for example, is a good lawyer, much more distinguished in his profession than I am in mine."

"Maybe it isn't profession or distinction or accomplishment that I'm interested in to-night. It's something altogether different."

"Character, I suppose."

"Not that either. Your brother and his wife are fine characters. There are lots of things they wouldn't do for moral reasons. I trust Hallam implicitly as a lawyer. And I'm sure that most of those young old men and women can be trusted."

"Yes," I said, "I'm sure they can."

Rhoda got up and put some wood on the fire. She lit another cigarette hurriedly and forgot to offer them to me. "Lee, it's not quite character but character has a lot to do with it. It's personality that I believe in. It's personality that makes me feel superior to that bunch. But it isn't enough that I should feel that way; I've got to prove it to myself. I'm twenty-seven, Lee. Please regard my life up to the present as a total loss. Regard me as being born right now. I'm going to change everything; I'm going to be a real person, not the time-server that I was in the West nor the indolent hussy that I am here right now. I've got to realize my personality!"

I was much impressed by the assertion of self. By way of contrast it made me feel as though I were a low type after all. At the same time I felt that she was incautiously blind to matters of great moment that escaped her observation. Of one of them I wished to speak without endangering, if possible, her expansive mood.

"Rhoda, do you mind telling me what place you give marriage in the scheme of life?"

"We used to talk of that years ago," she said with a furtive smile, "and I haven't materially changed my views. If I could find the right man, and if we could marry without doing violence to our freedom and our ideals, I should do so gladly, but I've almost given up the hope of that. When we spoke of it last, Lee, do you remember that I wanted freedom from an economic and domestic problem? I sold out more than I knew to get that. Now I want freedom from self-reproach because I regard myself as a superior woman without really being one. And the only way I can think of to get that is to strike out for a career of some kind, and I don't believe that there are many men who could help me to do that after marriage."

"No, I don't think so either."

"It's got to be real work, work that gets the best out of me, Lee. I want you to back me in this. The last time I felt myself entirely alone, and everything went badly. Will you help me work it out, old man?"

"Rhoda, I'll back you as long as you want me to."

"Do you think I could ever be a newspaper reporter?" she asked suddenly.

"I never gave the matter any thought but I will if you like. What gave you such an unwholesome idea?"

"I don't know," she said.

'If you want to take my advice from the start, I say finish your courses at Arlington. Finish all of them as well as you're doing mine and then you'll want the vacation when you get it. Then you'll be in a better position to decide exactly what you want to do."

"Oh, you stupid old dear! Do you think I can wait to decide what I want to do? Don't you know me well enough to know that I shall have to decide at once!"

"Well," I said, getting up to go, "it's too late to do any-

thing but leave you undecided for the night. I've simply got to go."

"Speaking of the summer, Lee," she said as we went to the door, "I'm putting Uncle Tad's old place in Chester in order. Will you and Went run out there this year for a while?"

"I'd love it," I said, "provided that you don't have any objectionable people there with us."

"Agreed. I'll have you alone. Good-night."

Although better friends than ever, we saw very little of each other that spring. It took some time before these fine intentions waxed strong enough to compete with her enthusiasm for her car, her wardrobe, and her apartment. She was not yet sufficiently bored with her surroundings. And as long as she was preoccupied with these things I felt sure that she would find me tedious. In what little work she did in Phil. 163a I observed a very considerable change and I gave her a straight B for the course. Her examination showed a sound and fairly extensive grasp of the history involved in the subject, but her understanding of philosophy and to a greater degree her understanding of religion were not as firm as I had wished. In the questions I had framed for the purpose of exercising judgment in a problem removed from habit and experience she answered, I thought, with plenty of good sense.

She found another friend, however, who could not help reminding her constantly of her new ambitions. It was Emily Goodshoe, a tough fibred, businesslike journalist, who had been slowly making a place for herself all the time that Rhoda had been teaching in the West. Doubtless it was she who had suggested to her the idea of journalism. Miss Goodshoe never made my heart throb with emotion, nor did my mind ever teem with interest for her. She lacked, I thought, imagination, humour, and colour, but she had a great many commendable qualities such as industry,

earnestness, and devotion. She and Rhoda had been previously acquainted at Radcliffe, but they had not been friends until they met by chance in Boston that year, and the friendship, once begun, took root. Emily managed to inspire Rhoda where Rhoda most needed inspiration; namely, in the matter of giving direction to her newly acquired impulse.

Late in June Rhoda reminded me of my promise and I started out with Wentworth in the runabout. It was our first tour together, and he was indeed very happy about it. At Chester we found Rhoda a bustling hostess. The place had run down and she was busy with gardener and carpenter restoring things to their former hospitality. Changes were made. A swimming pool was constructed, the barn made into a garage, and a very small barn built for the few remaining animals. She laid out a tennis court and modernized the house without changing its character.

"Isn't it wonderful!" she cried. "This is going to be my retreat when it gets either too hot or too cold in Boston. You may think it's too large for me but it isn't. I'm going to have lots of friends some day, and this place is going to be gay and free!"

The first morning Rhoda came down in breeches and worked or supervised all day. Her hair was short now, and she could wear it so without disturbing the lines of her head, for it had just enough curl to be suggestive and indefinite. I never saw her so enthusiastic, so preoccupied with thoughts of the future, so anxious, so panting. We were very happy, both of us, and Wentworth, though he could not forgive Rhoda the short hair and the breeches, was otherwise completely seduced by the farm. What delighted him was the country, the hills, the perpetual action of agricultural affairs, and the entire freedom from the disciplinary education that was the sorrow of his childhood and the foundation of his future.

"Why did you do it, Rhoda?" he would ask her about her personal innovations.

"Don't you like me this way?" she replied.

"I do, but . . ." he would say and then pause, knowing that he could not fill out his sentence. She upset his ideas, quite naturally, of what a woman should be.

He liked to feed the pigs and after supper he would run off with the gardener and, in that pestering way of children that one dare not discourage for fear of checking the healthy growth of curiosity, he would watch him do his chores.

"I hope he hasn't bothered your man too much," I said the last night that we were there. "I thought you would tell me if you found him too much of a nuisance."

"He enjoys him," said Rhoda. "I can see it."

"You're making the old place awfully comfortable."

"Lee, I adore that boy!" She laid her hand on my arm with more affection than she would have bestowed upon me for my own sake.

"That's good. . . . He resembles his maternal grandmother, by the way."

"Hell! Lee," she cried, gently disturbing the order of my beard with her free hand, "he's your boy, your own image!—that is when he isn't my boy, as he is right now. See what fun he's having with his pigs."

In the distance I observed the pride of my life mingling with the beasts of the barnyard on terms of familiarity that would have shocked me had not Rhoda taken upon herself the responsibility for his recently acquired tastes.

"You're the only woman I know with whom I could share him," I said absent-mindedly. It was at best an awkward speech, capable of being interpreted not only beyond my intention but with literal truth; and it mortified me to indulge in *double entendre,* which is against my nature when serious, and it annoyed me exceedingly be-

cause I had planned to discuss this very matter with Rhoda shortly. She, however, perceived my embarrassment and understood precisely the reason for it. With the sympathetic intuition that distinguished her from every woman I have met, she said immediately and with perfect candour:

"I often wonder why."

That gave me the opportunity to pursue either meaning or both. I'm sure that if I ever felt gratitude I did then. Uppermost in my mind was the impulse to go on talking of Wentworth in his present state without suggesting the possibility of a step-mother but, for some reason or other, perhaps that Rhoda seemed to respond to the *double entendre,* I said, unable to break at once into the concrete:

"I've often wondered why, myself! You're so very different from the kind of woman that I think I like when I sit down and figure out what a woman should be, and yet I never . . . It's because you're so damned honest!" I added, breaking away from both of my former channels and putting it emphatically upon a philosophical basis.

Suddenly Rhoda kissed my forehead as she had done once long before. I felt myself reaching out, but she had fled to the other side of the swing and stood with her hands resting gently upon the board seat, still smiling upon me, but in an entirely different mood.

CHAPTER V

Travelling with Wentworth in those days thoroughly tested one's ability to answer unrelated questions extemporaneously. His reaching out after knowledge covered, though somewhat sparsely, the whole range of human experience and much that seemed foreign even to the untrammelled imagination of childhood. On account of my limitations as a motorist I had forbade his asking me anything while the car was in motion, which severely tested his powers of restraint, but he found relief in remembering what he had wished to ask, and, when at lunch or while taking oil, he would let fly at me with a great many inquiries at once.

On our way home from Chester, however, I observed for the first time while driving with him that something preoccupied his mind to the exclusion of his habitual, restless curiosity. For an hour or two he did not even desire to probe my mind. Wentworth hummed or whistled, he regarded the scenery listlessly, as a man does when he feels certain that his concentration is so perfect that he does not even fear distraction.

After forty or fifty miles of comfortable travel one of my rear tires went down unexpectedly. I got out, put on a duster, and began to change the rim, having plenty of spares already mounted. Wentworth remained in his seat and made no effort to assist me with a wrench as he had been taught to do, nor did he avail himself of the armistice to attack me with questions. He looked, I thought, a little sad. After tightening up the rim I pounded all the other tires with my hammer to see whether they were sharp

or flat, and taking off my duster with a sigh of satisfaction, I lit my pipe.

"Let's rest a while," I said. "We're in no hurry."

"I'm sorry we didn't stay longer at Chester, father. I hate going back to Belmont."

"You'll be glad enough when you get home." It did not displease me that he disliked leaving Uncle Tad's old place.

"Cousin Rhoda is awfully nice, isn't she, father?"

"Yes, indeed she is, Went."

"Father, is it right for a man whose wife is dead to marry again?"

"I think so, my boy; I think so."

There is little that I dislike more than giving a child a definite answer to questions the full meaning of which he does not understand himself. On this occasion Wentworth had very little notion of what he meant by right, or what he meant by marriage; and yet the question was a fair one, for a child has to use some words as a mathematician uses symbols of the unknown. Sitting down on the running board with my back to him, I added: "It's perfectly right, in some instances."

"Oh!" he said, and I heard no more until after I had knocked out my pipe and climbed back into my seat. "Isn't it too bad, father," he said, fetching a deep sigh and assuming an air of finality, "that you're too old to marry Cousin Rhoda."

"Isn't it!" I said, and put the car in motion as fast as I could.

That was why I wanted to keep Wentworth close to Rhoda. Childhood has a great deal of unconscious cruelty about it and a father dare not wince. If he does the child reacts usually in a fashion unhealthy to himself; either he feels his power and wants to bully, or he assumes an attitude of superiority, not based upon the real superiority of

youth over age, but upon a false notion of the tenderness with which parents have to be treated. I never thought much of objecting to the candour of an honest child; it should be formed rather than destroyed.

Of course, when this cruelty manifested itself against others I could meet it at once. I had already trained him not to comment upon obvious afflictions or deformations of the flesh. "Jenkins," he had once said to the butler, "why do you have those horrid things on your neck?" and I spent an afternoon memorable in the history of his own afflictions explaining the error of such remarks. But it remained for me to find some way of restraining him from making unkind remarks to me.

There was naturally no sting in his reflections about my great age as compared to my cousin, for I was then only thirty-four and she was twenty-eight. If I had spoken to him I have no doubt that he would have cried as though he had done something seriously displeasing to me, and such an experience, if repeated, would have a tendency to inhibit his frank utterance in my presence, and nothing could have been further from my wishes.

The problem boiled down to something like this. I wanted him to possess a few ideas that he lacked, ideas that had to do with the fitness of expressing a certain kind of observation to his father, and I wanted these ideas to reach him through a medium other than myself, preferably Rhoda.

But after all, I thought as we rode on, the problem is not as simple as all that. What matter if he did pass me some stinging parcels of impudence now and then? These remarks, of course, were not in themselves worth a moment's consideration. The palpable absurdity of the particular remark kept me smiling for at least ten miles, and yet in my heart I knew that he had judged me with the only unmarried woman he had known and concluded that

I was unfit for her. His putting it down on the account of age really signified nothing; his sigh and his finality had told volumes.

We stopped for lunch. His philosophizing mood had vanished but mine remained. We had drawn up under the shade of some great elms on the skirt of a small town. With our backs to the road we sat dangling our feet over the stone wall of a pasture. The cattle in the foreground amused me as I munched a sandwich and drank some coffee.

"What are you thinking about, father?" Wentworth asked.

"It occurs to me that that horse is a very beautiful animal." My son did not disagree with me but his eyes did not long remain in the foreground; they became enticed by an object upon the horizon.

"Father, what is that next to the big red barn?"

"It's a windmill, son."

"What's that?"

"It stands with wings outstretched to the wind; and the wind takes hold of the wings and turns them round."

"What for?"

I had to take paper and pencil and give him a diagram of a water-supply system that worked with the assistance of a windmill.

His knowledge was too factual, even for a boy of seven, and it was probably my fault for not having given him sufficient play with his education. I have noticed that some children when impressed, say: "I like that," and others, "I want that," but with Wentworth it was always an inquiry about the facts. As we climbed back into our seats it seemed to me that the peculiar cruelty that he had recently developed was closely linked with his excessive indifference to what he liked and didn't like. It was obvious even to me that it would have impaired his honesty to

enjoin him from making cutting personal remarks and that whether I or Rhoda did it made very little difference. The main thing was that he had no sympathy.

I wanted Rhoda to develop sympathy in the boy, sympathy not intellectualized, but born of imagination. After all, what I wanted was something very close to emotion.

We reached Belmont late that evening, and after I had rested and attended to the details of domestic life, I walked slowly up to the club and seated myself in a chair that I placed on the lawn just a few paces from the veranda. It was a lovely summer night with a cool, full moon and a breeze that seemed to come from the distant sea. There was hardly any mist, but from a wisp of smoke here and there the lights of Boston were reflected.

"Wentworth," I said to myself, "needs Rhoda, but I wonder if my reason for insisting upon it is not that I need her myself." It was a matter that disturbed me not only that night but for a good many nights to come.

The remainder of the summer I spent in Belmont, but I sent Wentworth back to Rhoda, being persuaded that, although he wept to come home and was genuinely lonely for me, it was better to let him have the run of the farm than my yard, and better still that he should have Rhoda for a playmaster.

Rhoda was brilliant that fall. If my young devil needed her he certainly gave a good deal in return. For, as she told me again and again, she had never loved anyone so much before. True, while studying she had developed imaginative and romantic devotion for this or that professor, and while teaching she had been fond of this one or that, but she had never before been able to love without reservation, and the fact that it was a mere attachment for a child did not detract from what the experience meant to her. He became something of a charge, but her capacity to handle him increased rapidly. It meant a great deal

for her to have someone frankly glad when she put in an appearance; he had loved her without a moment's hesitation, and his childish attentions would bring a flush of pleasure to her cheeks.

She did take up journalism—what though I had pleaded against it—and she may have exercised good judgment in the matter. My arguments had been in favour of more teaching; I had urged that it was more suited to her nature and that I could find her a good opening, something, I promised, that would not even remind her of her work in Wisconsin. Journalism, however, was what she wanted, and it is only just to say that she never regretted her decision for long, and that she always met with a fair measure of success.

The apartment went through a gradual metamorphosis, beginning with a slightly bohemian atmosphere and becoming ultimately something of a studio. She began having friends and entertaining; and I was not amazed never to find a familiar face there. They were chiefly of the younger set in the arts, the press, and the theatre, people who stimulated Rhoda and urged her to action.

She had never been able to get on with her own family or the people she knew as a young girl, and the university society she had found too microcosmic, too coldly abstract and theoretical. The first was a train that took one nowhither; the second, one that remained perpetually stalled at a charming way station. It did not therefore surprise me to find Rhoda recruiting her acquaintances from the dens of the younger bohemian lions. Accepting it as a matter of course, I was curious to find out who her lasting friends would be when they distinguished themselves from mere membership in a hastily assembled set.

Of course I did not figure of social consequence in this milieu. They thought of me rather as a quaint old school-

master in whom Rhoda was charitable enough to recognize at most a distant relationship, and I did not care to assert myself to upset this view. I had so well escaped social responsibility up to this point that I did not then wish to revise my bargain with life.

Rhoda entertained badly at first but within a month or two she reported that people were enjoying themselves, and I could see that it was so. There was nothing remarkable about it. Any attractive young woman of intelligence and means can almost always meet the world on her own terms, but in Rhoda's case it was an advance. Previously she had been as solitary as a person can well be; she had been lonely at home, at college, and at the school where she had taught, and she had held aloof so persistently that her associates distrusted her and came to avoid her almost in the manner of persecution. Rhoda now began going out and receiving, quite as though she had done so joyously all her life.

Her work was fairly amusing to me that fall. She began modestly as a free lance. What she actually composed in the way of journalism was of that extraneous matter that swells our papers with tedium, the feature story, and, distressing and distasteful as these were to me, I enjoyed immensely going over with her the stories of their origins and sales. Journalists never write anything one-half so precious as the stories of how they get their news.

As she told me these things I learned much about Rhoda that I never knew, perhaps because it did not manifest itself in her nature before. She loved to talk; she loved to reveal her emotion toward life by means of her narrative of daily events. She wanted sympathy and understanding, but she had not yet reached the point where she demanded them and fought for them. Her manoeuvering after these solaces developed charm, kindness, and sweetness that she

never previously exhibited, qualities that she soon found worth cultivating for their own sake.

She wanted people to think well of her, to be glad when she came into the room. I would remonstrate with her that close cropped hair and her gruff and boisterous manners shocked most of the very Boston people whom she wished to endear. "I don't care," she would say, "I do what I think right." "But you don't need to make every rationalized whim of yours a moral principle to die for," was my usual reply.

The city editor of the *Boston Journal* refused to see her or any of her copy. Rhoda was naturally furious. The *Journal* presently found room for a few stories ridiculing the modern woman. Rhoda fought back as well as she could, with the result that she found herself in a blaze of publicity just a few months after launching her career.

Much as she suffered from the personal animosity and easy contempt of this editor, she went forward with others, particularly with his competitors. She had what she called a good nose for news, and I think she possessed a faculty for concrete and extemporaneous expression. Words never bothered her; she was naively oblivious to style all her life. If she got wind of the rumour that this or that city editor would look favourably upon a story dealing with the newest Paris frocks to reach Boston, or the laying record of some ancient bricklayer of Cambridge, or the most baffling mechanical toy invented, she would go hunting like a cat, pounce upon the gossip, and then go back to her apartment to hammer it off on her machine. It was hard for me to distinguish between her work and that of her contemporaries in the same field. What struck me as creditable was not the product of her pen, but the competence with which she went about doing what she set out to do.

That fall we played golf or tennis together at Belmont, or walked idly over the paths and roads not frequented by automobiles. At each meeting she would tell me everything that happened since we last met, down to the most minute details. I learned all about her stories, who would take them and who not. She thought of everything that season as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, as a sort of training school for the journalistic opening that was to come when she had spread her name far enough. What sustained her ambition was the picture of a career, the hope of attaining a position of fulfilment, a position that would eliminate her self-reproach and permit that happy expansion of personality that she desired of all things.

In looking back over that winter to-day, I have a tendency to think of it too much as a matter of simple friendship chiefly because it ended that way. It was not, however, completely idyllic. I thought of her always, and as I went through the commonplace experiences of life I found myself making a narrative record like hers in the back of my mind. I too would pour out with meaningless little stories of my doings just as though they dealt with matters of importance or interest; but, while Rhoda did it in order to elicit my sympathy, I think that I did it in an effort to reveal myself as well as I could to a woman, and one way to accomplish this was to focus her attention on my emotion in such trivial matters as the bursting of a tire or the flunking of a student.

Certain things in nature arouse in most of us an invariable and individual response. I, for one, am affected by falling snow, and by the light mist that sometimes rises from the ground or pavement when a soft rain strikes a warm surface. I cannot remember falling snow without also remembering that I wished to go walking, to feel the

softness against my cheeks, or to catch the sharp, frozen wind as the case might be.

But closely associated with this desire to go walking is the desire to go walking with a woman, and a woman toward whom I stand in a certain relationship. For as long before that fall as I can remember, I had never seen either of these manifestations of nature without a longing to lock arms with the Rhoda of Radcliffe, in the old days; later, with one long since dead; and, finally, with some vague figure of my imagination who might some day mean to me what her predecessors had meant.

Snow came late in November that fall, one Sunday afternoon while Rhoda and I were assisting at Wentworth's early supper. I got up and went to the window and I was amazed to observe that as I watched the snow falling, I felt Rhoda's presence much nearer than I had at the table.

"Rhoda," I said, "let's go walking in the snow."

"Oh don't," said Wentworth. "We've just come in."

"You have a cold, son. You'd better amuse yourself lighting the first fire of the year. Want to come, Rhoda?"

She looked at me and then at Wentworth. "You'll be hurt if we go?"

"No," said Wentworth, bending over the wood basket, "but please come back here before you go in for the evening."

"We'll only be a minute, son," I said as we put on our things.

"Lee," said Rhoda, as we struck the path that runs around the edge of the golf course, "it's great fun to see the snowflakes catch in your beard. If you only wouldn't melt them so fast they'd turn it white! I think I'll write a feature story about snow in the philosophic beard."

"You couldn't sell it, but if you could write one about yourself as I see you it would turn out a classic. The

snow hides our defects and our reality; it shrouds us in a veil of seductive power. Only what is glorious shines through and seems to come from a bed of crystals, miraculously brilliant. Do you know, I should like to see you in the middle of the week, this time? I can't wait so long to see you again."

"You silly old thing! What's happening to you?"

"What always happens to a man when he has a friend—when he gives himself to a friendship like this."

"It isn't because I'm not your friend that I don't want to come out in the middle of the week, Lee."

"Friendship is a delicate and tender thing; it seeks the recognition of all that is sensitive, of all that can ease pain or preserve pleasure. It desires to smooth the rough; to give life a daily bread of happiness. It tries, above all, to preserve itself as it is; it is conservative, sedate, restrained. Its virtues are constancy, sympathy, and understanding. But friendship, Rhoda, when it is touched with love, becomes expansive; it reaches out after more and will not be satisfied. It asks frankly for all or nothing; it gives all with a gesture of joy. It turns its back upon the plain facts of life and tries to grasp the ideal by the hand. Friendship, transformed by love, disregards the limits of human beings and sometimes destroys itself trying to give what it has not, and trying to take what cannot exist."

We walked in silence for some time and then, when I took her arm and felt the pressure of her hand, I said: "Rhoda, I want to make the same offer that I made that June evening in Cambridge."

"It sounds cruel of me to say it, Lee, but I never could have forgiven you if you had not wanted to marry me. It would have seemed a terrible slight to our friendship."

"No more than yours in not accepting."

"Oh, please don't ask me, Lee. I do love you, and I'm mad about Went, but I just couldn't marry you. I'm not

going to say that I find you unattractive—there never was another man in my life who came anywhere near you—and I'm not going to say that you're not ambitious enough, as I once did, because when a man is like you he doesn't need to be ambitious. All he has to be is himself."

"Rhoda, darling, what are you going to say? You surely don't think I'm lacking in love for you."

"On the contrary, you have given me more devotion than I deserved, and you've filled so much that was empty in my life."

"Why should you put me off, Rhoda? Why are you so evasive? Tell me out and out all about it. Is it that odd notion of yours that you cannot marry, or that you're afraid of your independence? I shan't ask any more of your independence as a wife than I have as a friend. Why can't you tell me frankly?"

Rhoda was silent and tears began to rise to her half-closed lids, tears that were so different from the dew-drops of melting snow. Sorry as I was that I had blurted out so gracelessly, I felt that I had a right to know.

"Lee, forgive me if I hurt your feelings, forgive me if I refresh an old sorrow, but do you know why Josephine threw herself into the sea?"

Josephine was the name of my wife.

"I really don't know, Rhoda. Nobody knows. We all had our theories to explain away the facts, but we have no means to verify the theories. I surely don't know. Josephine had much to be unhappy about. We had been married a little over two years and her marriage seemed to be without joy. But she had also a good deal to be happy about. She might have had a worse husband, but she couldn't have had a better son, though it was hard to tell either of those things then. If she had wanted a divorce, I shouldn't have said a word. I think she loved me in an odd way, and I think she took the plunge in a moment of

derangement. She was more than excitable, she could be violently wrought up. She would come to me in a state of hysteria and interrupt my work no matter what I was doing. She would quarrel bitterly and then I would kiss her and tell her that everything was all right, and she would be abnormally happy for a day or so. She may have been seized with one of those moments of doubt and hate and, unable to talk it over with anyone, she threw herself into the water."

"I don't believe it, Lee. I was terribly interested in your marriage. You thought that I dropped out of your life after your elopement, but in reality I dropped out of your sight merely. I knew Josephine a little better than you had any idea. I think that her suicide was as deliberate as any I've ever heard about. She was profoundly miserable. She was miserable because she believed that she could never make a dent on your mind."

"What do you mean by that, Rhoda?"

"Josephine was a little the way I am but she didn't talk about it as much as I do. She was proud, ambitious, ready to suffer to be what she wanted to be. Josephine was fortunately so well off that life was never a question of to have or not to have—as Oscar Wilde said of one of his characters. She wanted *to be* more than a wife and mother, but she didn't really know what she did want. I thought she wanted to make an impression upon you as a mind and character, and I think she came to the conclusion that that was impossible."

"She was damned impatient, if that was why she did it!"

"She loved you, adored you, and thought you a model husband in every way. She hoped that the child would make a difference, but apparently it didn't. It was your intellectual superiority that forced her into solitude, and she was not big enough to stand solitude."

"Even if what you say is true, Rhoda, there is no reason why you should feel that way."

"I'm the same way, Lee, only I'm more conscious of it. I could love you and I could love your child, but I can't have a husband on terms of inequality. I should rather remain a spinster."

"But we are on terms of equality, Rhoda."

"Because I am with you only a short part of your time; because we meet when we are at leisure and have no problem to face together. I am positive that I can never mean anything to your mind and, as our friendship is the thing in life that I prize most, for God's sake don't marry me and condemn me to jealousy!"

"If your freedom means so much to you, Rhoda, I don't want to be the one to invade it. Let's go back and play with Went."

"You will not be unhappy over this?" she asked.

"There is no happiness for me, one way or the other."

"Or for me."

"For you!" I said, almost to myself. "How do you know?"

CHAPTER VI

The wind shifted briskly to the west, shaking the snow from the trees, and destroying the soft tones of the landscape. The foreground revealed itself cold, clear, and defiant. We quickened our pace; both of us were uncomfortable. Rhoda turned her head toward me now and then and her lips moved slightly as though she wished to speak but could not quite reach the point of breaking the silence with words. I, too, wished to relieve the tense atmosphere in which our stifled clash of emotion had left us, but we were so close that a word would have seemed to touch as concretely as a caress, and I was unable to make utterance which, in one way or another, would not have made the immediate situation worse.

Perhaps a change in tactics would have shattered her barriers, but I could not see a real advantage in that. She would raise them again, stronger than ever. Nor could I, at a moment when both of us were so painfully sensitive, make some innocuous remark grossly belying my real state of mind.

Years later Rhoda said that she never treasured up anything against me so much as my silence that night. Her only answer to my protest was that "if you had really felt for me what you should have, you would have bantered along with characteristic Anglo-Saxon nonchalance, hiding even from yourself what your sentiments were." I did not argue the matter, and perhaps in that restraint I mastered the art of a nonchalance she never knew about.

When we reached the door I was surprised by observing a hat and coat in the foyer.

"We have a visitor, Rhoda."

"I'll go at once, Lee. Say good-night to Went for me."

"Nonsense."

"Mr. O'Flarity Child, sir," said Jenkins, coming to the door and taking our things. "I asked him to wait."

"You'd like him, Rhoda."

"I'm sure I should hate him," she said, falling back and pretending to hide in the hangings.

"Come," I ventured, taking her arm and urging her, "he's not a bad sort, O'Flarity Child. You might like him. He'll agree with you in some of your hates."

We could hear Wentworth in the library; his tone had poise beyond his years. "Don't get up, Mr. Child," he was saying. "My father will be in presently. I just heard him at the door."

This was too much for my kinswoman. "I'll be good," she said and we entered the room. Wentworth and Mr. Child were seated opposite each other on the divan; the latter stood up and came to meet us.

He was a student of about four and twenty, pale, timid, Christ-like. He was tall and thin, and, though I thought he might become a man of physical gracefulness, I concluded intuitively that he would never acquire robustness or good form. He wore a four-button, oxford gray sack suit with thin trousers and black shoes; his poplin shirt was white and the necktie black. What suggested the martyrdom of the early Christians was the infrequent combination of sensitive humility mingled with firmness of mind and self-assertion that superseded each other in the play of his expression. His lips smiled delicately, and there was unusual roundness and depth to his slightly protruding eyes. His forehead escaped obstinacy, receding without a sharp line into the softness of his light, attractive hair of no particular colour. His voice had a soft and at times tremulous quality that some people thought effeminate.

What was most striking in this young man, not only at first meeting but always thereafter, was the brightness, the activity, the sheer size of his eyes. One liked to watch them, to look and talk into them; one felt that he was more to be reached through the eyes than the ears, and he evidently liked to have one think so. They would meet you head on, linger, twinkle, and at times seem positively to sparkle with vivacity. That night, and usually, in fact, he appeared to swing his whole personality and character from them.

The year previous his friend Aberdeen Duke, the portrait painter, created a sensation by a picture of O'Flarity Child that hangs to this day in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He posed his subject in a soft, silk shirt, open at the throat and displaying a perfect neck that Child always said belonged to someone else. His hands were clasped behind his back and the expression upon his face gave me the impression of a sort of impersonal sympathy, a compassionate sympathy, one that understood tragedy but had so far escaped being crushed by it. The intense blue of his eyes and the flush of burnt sienna over the cheek bones, contrasted with the tender pallor of his skin, were the most striking features of the likeness as well as the centre of decorative vitality in the portrait.

I knew him pretty well. I had known him first as a member of Phil. 163a, and I had had the pleasure of encountering him subsequently in my other courses. He was, as I believe I already mentioned, the only student ever to receive from me the maximum grade in that course. This was because I had found him generally head and shoulders above the best students who were reckless enough to come my way. His mind worked faster, his knowledge was more extensive and upon better foundations, and he had a tireless, restless quality of intellectual curiosity that made it a delight to have him before you. I found his mind

less original and less forceful than that of many a numskull, but taken all in all it measured up the best article that the dean had registered in my courses up to that time, or has since.

And he was one of those students to distinguish himself, it would seem, almost equally in a wide range of subjects. It astonished me to learn that he had done exceptionally well in history and politics and that one member of the faculty urged him repeatedly to pursue a group of studies aimed at making a man useful in the diplomatic service. In O'Flarity Child the university had broken its precedents. At last we had produced a man, or at least harboured a man, not a mere critic, educator, or argufier, but a man possessing all these qualities and an undeveloped creative faculty as well. The tradition that followed his name asserted that he was by nature a poet, a dreamer of dreams.

Out of reverence for this mild but persistent Napoleonic legend, people talked of him in hushed voices. What he said was repeated, and what people thought he believed they discussed seriously. Perhaps one of the reasons for this was that he permitted himself to say very little, and thought, when at all, in secret.

Once or twice while on my way home from the club at night, I met him on the road. He walked briskly, carried a stick, and seemed to enjoy his exercise. Once I persuaded him to come home with me, and this was followed by other visits until we got to know each other fairly well. He was a solitary student and hardly realized the stir he created among the gray beards of Arlington, and he retreated from every attempt that was made to draw him out of his solitude and into the supposedly brilliant circle of professors and students who set the pace at the university. He steadfastly refused to make one of them and succeeded in making his retreat without giving offense,

and if modifying his reputation in any way by these tactics, he added to it.

I found him a simple soul. His father was a St. Louis retail merchant of small means. O'Flarity was an only child and thought to suffer from a dangerous irregularity of the heart. He was brought up, it would seem, practically as an invalid and not permitted to exert himself physically. Not unnaturally he pursued his studies and shunned the robust pleasures, the dissipations, and the sports of healthy youth. The colouring of his complexion and the slightness of his build gave credence to the opinion of his heart, and lay persons who professed an insight into medical diagnosis would shake their heads and talk apprehensively of tuberculosis.

The accidents of childhood, however, are not always without compensation, and I doubt very much whether the development of O'Flarity Child would have taken the direction it did had it not been for these circumstances. He once told me that he had been raised with scrupulous care and financed in his quest for an education far beyond the means of his parents. They had always urged him not to take remunerative work, and he devoted himself exclusively to his studies, perhaps increasing thereby his capacity for going without things he loved by nature.

Of course I was more annoyed than surprised to find him in the library that night. I had wanted, of all things, to have some further conversation with Rhoda. During the previous week I had expected him to drop in at almost any time upon a small matter of university business. Why should he have taken the one day in the week when life was worth living without any business or without more guests? But despite my annoyance at his unwitting intrusion, I could not restrain a wave of friendliness as I smiled and took his hand.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Child," I said. "I should like

you to meet my cousin, Miss Lispenyard. Rhoda, I should like to present Mr. Child. I see that you have already made friends with Wentworth."

He shook my hand with remarkably little vigour for a college student and bowed in the general direction of Rhoda, who dropped into the divan next to Wentworth. "I came to see you about a university matter," he said. "I thought Sunday afternoon would find you more at leisure than you usually are, but perhaps I should have done better to come later in the week."

"Don't think of it," I said. "Sit down and have supper with us."

"With great pleasure," said Child deliberately, choosing the most remote chair and hiding himself in the shadows. Jenkins began to lay the table.

"Father," said Wentworth, "you were gone a terribly long time and I had a hard time persuading Mr. Child to wait."

"You did very well, Wentworth, and I hope you didn't tire waiting for us."

"No, your friend was most amusing."

"Went," said Rhoda, getting up and putting her hand on his head, "suppose you say good-night to everyone and then let me go upstairs with you."

It always amazed me to observe with what pleasure Wentworth would respond to Rhoda's summons, no matter if even the irksome formality of going to bed were suggested. I lit a cigarette and followed Mr. Child into the shadows.

"I suppose you came to see me about the Dunhill Memorial Fellowship," I said.

"Yes. The chairman of the committee said that your vote could never be obtained unless the applicant had a personal interview with you."

"I prefer it that way," I admitted. I had known that

his name had been raised for the fellowship and it had seemed to me that I did not have the right to withhold from him my vote if he really wanted it. No other candidate had impressed me the least favourably.

"I'm very anxious to get it," he said pleasantly.

"The Dunhill Memorial is a travelling fellowship that carries with it a stipend of two thousand dollars per annum and requires matriculation in one of a specified list of European universities for two years, or two for one year each."

"That's the way I understand it."

"And I believe it's the most sought-after fellowship we have."

"Undoubtedly."

"And I think the only question that I should have asked you is the one that you have anticipated, whether you really want it. So far as your work goes I think you deserve it if anybody does." Biennially, when the problem of the fellowship arises, I have a forlorn hope that some day a candidate will appear of no great record or promise, but a man or woman who could prove to my satisfaction that the one thing he loved in life more than studying philosophy for its own sake was the indulgence of sitting down and philosophizing without premeditation or ulterior motive. Such a person would certainly be hard to find, and he certainly would not be found decorated with the laurels of the university.

"What do you mean, Mr. Seebohm?" he asked. "It is hardly reasonable to suppose that I should apply if I did not really want it."

"My point is that there isn't any sense in taking that fellowship just because you've earned it, unless you really want to study. Young men come to college for different reasons, and they excel or fail for different reasons. I, for one, thought that you did substantial work with me,

but I never knew nor cared much until this minute whether you did it because you liked it or for some other reason. What do you expect to do in life, Mr. Child, if you don't mind my asking?"

"I expect to be a professional philosopher."

"My God!" I cried, "Another!" And then, remembering myself, I added: "I can't ever bring myself to think of philosophy as a profession, but I suppose it is as a matter of actual fact. Anyway, there aren't too many of us in the world surely." I liked him for saying his mind frankly and not trying to figure out what I wanted him to say.

"I think I have more aptitude for this than anything else, and the university holds open a place for me if I do creditably with the fellowship. Of course I can't help being strongly influenced by my health. I think the university life combines mental activity with physical inactivity in a good ratio for me."

There was a light step, and looking up I saw that Rhoda had come down. She paused by the table which was set back from the fireplace and lighted with shaded candles.

"That's all I am going to say on the subject and you may count on my vote. Please come and see me before you sail if your candidacy is successful. I should like to say something that would be superfluous now."

"Why do you both sit in darkness?" asked Rhoda.

"I don't know," I answered. "Let's come out of it."

I excused myself to go and see if I could persuade my small boy to go to sleep, and as I passed upstairs it seemed an immense relief to be alone if only for a moment. Entering Wentworth's room absent-mindedly I picked up the Bible from among his books. Turning down the light, except one near the foot of his bed, I turned the leaves, searching for a thumpingly dull passage that would give him an opportunity to fall asleep quickly.

"Please don't read to me, father!" he said emphatically.

I looked up; a glance assured me that Wentworth was testy and excited. Had I not been preoccupied myself I should have realized it before taking down a book from the shelf; I had done so automatically, without as much as looking at the boy, for he demanded reading at all times, even at his meals or his play. It was a sort of Greek chorus in his life, and the only way to escape it was to take him for a brisk walk or persuade him to indulge in some other form of physical exertion. My first response to his caution was to give no heed to it, but he rebelled so rarely for a boy of his age that I had a habit of trying to find out what was wrong when he complained. That night he was more than excited; he was not far from tears.

"I really couldn't follow you," he added, trying to conceal his emotion.

Sitting on the edge of his bed I took hold of one of his feet playfully through the covers, but it remained limp; he did not want to play. "What's the matter, old man?" I asked, looking into his face.

"I don't know."

"Are you sure you don't know, Went?"

"Sure," he almost sobbed.

"Went, old gentleman, if you were God, right now, and could do anything you wanted to do; if you could just give orders, old fellow, what would you do?" He turned over, faced me, forgot his tears, and actually smiled.

"Well," he interjected with intense satisfaction, "I'd just tell Rhoda that she's not to go away and leave us."

"What makes you think she's going to leave us, Went?"

"I'm afraid it's my fault," he said sorrowfully, unable to sustain the illusion that he was God.

"Nonsense, Went, I'm sure you didn't do anything that hurt Rhoda."

"Yes, I did. I asked her why you and she didn't marry, and she didn't like it a bit. She said I shouldn't ask ques-

tions like that. And then, I was talking about what we were going to do in the spring, and she said she wouldn't be with us in the spring, and I didn't understand."

"I'll talk to you about it in the morning, Went. You'll understand better when the sun is shining, and you won't feel so bad about it either. Just before sleep the imagination is treacherous; it puts things in a false light. It makes us think that only the tenderly emotional things in life count. You couldn't help asking that question, and Rhoda couldn't help being hurt. Now, I want you to go to sleep."

"I'm so unhappy, father." He was obviously pleading for me to stay, but supper was served and my guests were waiting.

"You have a great deal to be happy for, Went," I said, as I opened the window and went to the door, trying to console him more by the tone of my voice than what I actually put into words. "If I had had your emotion, my dear boy, my life had been very different indeed."

"Good-night, father."

"Good-night." I shut the door and started down the hall. There are some experiences that have the effect of making one for the moment more sensitive than one habitually is; one's observation then seems to have the advantage of special senses. The wind whistled audibly through the door as I blocked it with one foot for an instant to prevent it from slamming, and in that instant, beyond anything that I could see or hear, it seemed to me that my boy buried his head with a sob in his pillow.

It was clear to me that he was getting on rapidly to the stage where a boy can neither fathom the meaning nor escape the consequences of some fundamental domestic relationships. What had Rhoda been saying to the boy? It was not usual for her to confide in him in matters of any importance without first speaking to me. We had worked out our scheme of bringing him up together; it

had been a subject of frequent and intimate conference. Had she suddenly decided to throw everything over? Perhaps she had been more moved by our conversation than she cared to let me know and had reached the conclusion that, unable to give all, she had best give nothing.

Changes come over characters quickly. She may have thought with her alertness of intuition that her antagonism to marriage was a mere phantom. It was her resistance to me that made her proceed generally as though marriage were an impossibility.

I went down feeling profoundly unhappy and nervously uncertain. Looking up as I entered the library I saw that dinner was served. Mr. Child had come out of the shadows and he and Rhoda waited for me in front of the fireplace. The pink cheeks of my former student were even rosier than they had been before I left the room, as he stood carelessly leaning against a chair with his hands in his pockets. Rhoda struck my vision in profile. She was at her best, proud, eager, inwardly excited; her hands were clasped behind her; and, as she seemed to lean slightly forward on her toes, she observed her companion acutely.

"And then, after your travels, what are you coming back to the university for?" she was asking as I approached them.

His eyes caught the reflection of the fire. "I like staying on at Arlington," he said.

"Ridiculous, I think, for a young man to hang about the university too long."

"Why?" he asked pleasantly.

"You'll bury yourself alive."

"Perhaps you can suggest something better to do, Rhoda," I said.

"Better than burying oneself alive?"

"I'm not willing to admit that returning to the university is just that, but let's sit down first."

The table was a rather narrow oblong and I placed both of my guests opposite me. Rhoda looked up excitedly, fearing that she had wounded me, that she had cast a slur upon my race, as it were. She wanted instantly to throw her denial upon me, but the presence of Mr. O'Flarity Child restrained her. I tried to convey the impression that I was not offended, but lost some time in doing so. I suffered then, as now, from an inability to meet an emotional situation directly; something had to be done to close the incident after which I could give an able post mortem on what my sentiments had actually been.

"I'm afraid we assumed that you dined in the middle of the day, Mr. Child. I hope that this simplicity will leave you no regrets."

"I did dine at noon," he said, breaking his bread with an assuring smile. "Regrets would be unthinkable."

"You were saying, Rhoda," I went on, "that a young man buried himself alive at Arlington, and I said I couldn't agree. Now that I come to think of it, it might be better natured of me not to argue it too insistently as I have some personal prejudice in the matter. I might seem to be defending myself before I was attacked."

"I didn't mean it that way, Lee."

"Of course not, but you still think that Mr. Child is making a mistake in thinking that he should return to Arlington to devote his life . . ."

"That's the rub. It all depends on what he expects to do when he does return."

"I'm afraid you're playing on both sides, Rhoda."

"Why not let me decide that when I come to it," said Mr. Child, looking up in his conciliatory manner.

"As usual," said Rhoda, "I'm guilty of vast rudeness."

"Oh, not at all," said Child.

"Yes, it certainly was rude of me to call you to an account for your possible conduct some two or three years hence. There can't be much argument as to that, as you would say," she added, nodding in my direction.

"There might be," I admitted.

"Well, then," said Mr. Child, "let me say that I don't much care whether you were rude or not."

"Thanks," said Rhoda, beaming.

"I rather like the speed with which you got down to the important things in life. Most people would have asked me what I thought about something that I never thought much about."

We passed on to a discussion of other things, of the university in general, and later, over our cigars, of our own department, much to the regretted silence of Rhoda. It was of interest to me to find out to the ranks of which of the contending schools of contemporary philosophy this student would be likely to ally himself on the completion of his studies. Much to my amazement he seemed to me lacking in conviction in matters that he thought of sufficient importance to preoccupy him for the rest of his life. This lack of conviction, however, militated in favour of the width and intimacy of his knowledge and the freedom of his judgment.

"I have to go," he said early in the evening.

"So do I," said Rhoda, much to my surprise. "May I give you a lift anywhere? Which way do you go?"

"To Arlington."

"No distance at all."

"Come again some time, Mr. Child," I urged as he was going, "come and see me as a friend instead of as a chair."

"Gladly," he said, and they were both shortly gone.

I met Rhoda a few days later. "I have a new beau," she cried and laughingly gave me an account of their ride to Arlington.

"Shall I put the windshield up?" she had asked him when they had seated themselves in her little speedster. The sky had cleared, the moon and stars had come out sharply, and the wind had calmed considerably.

"However it suits you, Miss Lispenyard."

"I can't make much speed on account of the snow."

"So much the better; it's a fine night."

"Well, I'll leave it down; the engine will keep us warm enough after we get going." They sat in front of the house for a moment while the engine warmed itself and they were off slowly, more because the snow veiled the footing than obstructed their progress.

"May I reverse the order and ask you what you do in life?" O'Flarity Child asked quite sincerely.

"I'm a journalist; I'm a journalist of a very low calibre, but I hope to be better some day."

"What made you decide to do that of all things?"

"Being a woman stands less in my way in journalism than in most of the things I could do."

"Is it your ambition to give up journalism and write books some day?"

"No, all I want to be is a top-notch journalist."

"I suppose one could have something of a career at it if one stuck hard enough."

"I hope so," said Rhoda with a smile of satisfaction as she regained the ruts and stopped the car from a momentary skidding.

"I should have told you, Miss Lispenyard, that one reason why I figure on going back to Arlington is that I have heart trouble, and I think that life is suited to my physical temperament."

"Oh, that's it, is it?"

"That's why I'm burying myself alive, as you call it."

"Oh, please don't ever remind me of having said such a mean thing!" Rhoda had gone through life saying harsh

little things and the nearest she came to sweetness was in her repentance of them.

The moon was shining through a fleecy cloud and by its pale blue light seemed to add to the cold. Rhoda had been right, the heat from the engine kept them perfectly warm; it was only the breeze in their faces that was icy. Mr. O'Flarity Child lapsed into silence. He looked down at the road and the sharp receding shadows from the headlights. Rhoda wondered what he was thinking about and what his emotions were. She was driving cautiously, feeling her way with care foreign to her nature. The glare from her headlights made the snow too blinding, and she found it difficult to keep to the road. Already she had overheated the radiator; the steam rose from the cap and was carried back by the wind, beautiful in the moonlight. Suddenly there was the sound of choking and coughing in the motor and after a few vigorous, ominous explosions from parts of the car that should remain quiet, Rhoda drew up to the right and stopped.

"Anything wrong?" asked her passenger.

"Just overheated, I think."

"I don't know anything at all about motors, Miss Lispenyard."

"Neither do I, but we might wait and let it cool before I start to bother."

"Yes, you might burn yourself."

"It's most disagreeable."

"What made it overheat?" he asked, instantly curious. "Does it always do this?"

"I'll see if I can find out for you. I'll get out and look if you don't mind my stepping over you." With her hand on the seat over his shoulder she half vaulted over him to the step before he had time to pick himself up. Then he got down and followed her languidly.

"It's outrageously hot," said Rhoda. "I shouldn't have done that."

"Have a cigarette? I rather like stretching my legs. I'm not used to riding with my feet so high. It's so comfortable that it makes me stiff. Ordinarily I sit up or lie down, but that tries to do both at once."

"Thanks," said Rhoda, and in the flare as he made to light her cigarette she glanced at his face for an instant. He was watching the match with his bright eyes as she inhaled awkwardly. He gripped his own cigarette loosely and seemed more intent upon a boyish smile that reminded her of Wentworth. Something in his manner suggested that he did not think the speedster quite dignified. She turned to the machine.

"Here's the trouble! I forgot to open this leather radiator cover and let the air in before we started." She slipped it off and put it away. "The water has stopped boiling already; we'll be off in a minute."

"It's quite jolly here," said O'Flarity Child. "I'm in no hurry at all."

"It's a bit mean to offer to take a fellow home on a cold winter's night and then keep him standing on the road."

"I'm enjoying myself immensely—ever so much more than if I had walked."

"Do you like walking?" Rhoda had the apologetic tone of a woman who wishes to retain the control of the conversation but doesn't know exactly what to do with it.

"Yes, ever so much. It's the one relief that I have from work. It has a way of taking out of my mind all the serious thoughts that I may have. It frees the emotions, too, and gives me a perfectly delightful half-dreaming, half-conscious view of the world."

"Your relaxation," said Rhoda, "must be remarkably complete."

"When I take a walk after I'm through working, Miss Lispenyard, only those things seem real and of importance that, when I am working, seem of unreality."

"It sounds quite wonderful to me," said Rhoda, capriciously. "You must be sorry I didn't let you walk home by yourself."

"Why, I can walk alone any night, Miss Lispenyard. I've enjoyed meeting you immensely."

"But you shouldn't say what you don't mean."

"You know, Miss Lispenyard, the reason why I have never been able to get on socially is that when an obvious remark seems to me true and in point, I simply can't refrain from letting it out. Of course the same trait is responsible for my getting on as a student. A good many chaps make an awful mess of things because they're afraid of saying the naive and simple thing. They invent the most stupid rot to create the impression of ingenuity with their professors." There was something in that speech that seemed persuasive to Rhoda; she was attracted and disarmed by his candour.

"Well, if one confidence deserves another, there are two reasons why I have done badly socially. One is that I never wanted to do well; the other is that I have been too quick to detect insincerity, and have often detected it where it didn't exist."

He didn't quite know whether she was teasing him, or at least coaxing him. It was not altogether clear why such observations should be called confidences, but after all her self-criticism was more intimate than his own, so he continued along the same track, to his own amazement and Rhoda's amusement.

"That's a great pity. You know, people think I don't like social life, that I shun it, that I like to be alone. It isn't so; I love it! It's only that I'm so damned unsuccessful at it that I know enough to keep out of it."

"I think the motor is cool enough to start now, and if you think you're really not sorry that you didn't walk we'll try her again. I wanted to make sure that you had no regrets before setting you down." She loosened the caked snow from her satin slippers, and O'Flarity, after a moment's hesitation and reflection, laughed broadly.

"Suppose I should say that I was not quite convinced that it was better to take your lift," he said as he climbed in after her. "Would you keep me here longer trying to convince me?"

"No, I'd give you up." The motor started vigorously and after speeding it up two or three times she reduced the gasoline to a minimum and listened to the muffled puffs of the explosion with vast satisfaction. "Nothing wrong with the essence," she said with a smile as she started.

They rode slowly and remained silent for some time. Then Rhoda turned her head slightly and remarked: "You know, it hasn't occurred to me for some years that anyone rational would think of social life in terms of success, that is, of course, unless he's going in for big stuff and expects to sink or swim through it."

"Really?" said Child solemnly. He was thinking of something else, and presently he broke the silence with what Rhoda took to be soliloquy. "Excuse me if I think it's all slightly absurd. I go to Professor Seebohm's on academic business and expect to get a grilling on the Dunhill Memorial Fellowship. Instead he invites me to supper and says that all he wanted to know was whether I really wanted it. And then I meet a charming journalist who takes me home reclining in a speedster that has the mercy to get overheated on a cold night, so that my pleasure is thereby prolonged."

"How long could you go on that way if I didn't interrupt you?"

"You know," he said, paying no attention to her discouragement, "I don't leave that campus for months except to go walking, and I don't meet a soul."

"I didn't know that, Mr. Child, but from what you previously said I thought you had somebody to dream about and so no need for companionship."

"No. The point in dreaming is that you can always have somebody to dream about without having anybody in your life."

Rhoda tried not to let herself observe that her cheeks were warmer than ordinarily. She should have liked to stop the car again; she wanted to have it out with herself, to ask herself what she felt and why. But the odd part of it was that she didn't really care, the desire was not imperative, and the alternative of going on seemed to her in itself more pleasant than anything she had done in years. But the answer seemed to come without the process of introspection as she glanced at O'Flarity Child out of the corner of her eye. She had been living too long herself against the whole world. Even toward me, her best friend, there was no relaxation of her resistance. Now she suddenly found herself in the dreamy state that her companion had just described. Her work, her career, her personality, seemed for the moment nothing to her; she forgot even her fight against the world for her rights. She had come, in the last half hour or so, into the world that she had always thought enemy territory, into the world where she had to be a woman among men and women, and she found the dreaded haunt of the weak so very delightful.

They joined the tracks of the Cambridge trolley on Massachusetts Avenue, where the snow had been swept clean. Rhoda welcomed the opportunity to drive normally, for in her excitement she had found it extremely difficult to go slowly and with deliberation over the snow-

hidden road from Belmont. They were in Arlington in a moment.

"Where shall I drop you?"

"Drop me at the corner drug store. Will you have a hot drink before you go on?"

"Thank you, no. I want to get my car in the garage and go home."

"Thanks for the lift," he said as they drew up to the curb.

"You're welcome," she said as he got out. Her foot slipped off the brake; she put in the gear.

"May I call on you some time?" he asked, the wind blowing his soft hair across his forehead as he stood with his hat in his hand.

"Yes, indeed. Good-night to you." And taking her foot slowly off the clutch she moved into the night. Mr. Child entered the drug store and ordered his constitutional; Rhoda drove recklessly to Boston feeling suddenly rejuvenated and joyously happy.

That same night, however, was a lonely one for me. I sat down by the fire in the mood of a man who realizes that some changes have to be made in his life that will rob him of much that he holds dear. My relationship with Rhoda had clouded over. There is something ridiculous in pursuing a friendship where the possibilities have been exhausted and the limits reached. There is something especially painful, after hitting the pace evenly together for years, to find that suddenly one is defensively lagging behind the other, while the other tries to persuade the first to follow where his best instincts and emotions lead.

I was unable, that night, to free my thoughts from a formal benediction on our friendship that seemed to descend upon me. My first thought was to break away boldly and completely; my loss would be so much greater

than hers that there would be nothing niggardly in this. But there was Wentworth, who also had no other woman in his life. He was learning so much from her that I could not teach, and he needed her in his way far more than I did in mine. It was not that I wanted to shield him from the unhappiness of losing Rhoda. Though his tears never failed to touch me I thought that the cure for them lay in learning to do without happiness. I did not observe even then that Rhoda gave him more pleasure than pain, but she stimulated his imagination and sympathy, and I thought these of such importance to him that I could very easily weather any tormenting emotion that might fall to my lot in Rhoda's society as a naturally weak member of the human race.

Nevertheless, from that afternoon on, I ceased being a principal in the narrative at hand, and as an observer my position became so far removed from the scenes and characters that much of the detail came to me only after a long intervening period.

CHAPTER VII

Mr. O'Flarity Child did call presently, and he followed his first visit with many others in rapid succession. It was noticeable to me from my august chair that something was happening to the candidate for the Dunhill Memorial Fellowship. Not that anything he did or failed to do at that late date would have altered his supremacy among the rival candidates; the sheer momentum of his academic career would have carried him over any momentary embarrassments or lapses.

But I did observe in the few remaining lectures and conferences in which he came before me that his intellectual curiosity gave place to mental inertia; he became a disinterested spectator in the lecture room. His unusual knowledge that I formerly delighted in calling upon was now as inaccessible and hidden-for-the-dust as remote volumes in the stacks of the reference library. There was no longer the certainty of finding what you wanted. Once or twice, as if to prove to us that he was not beyond recall, he would show himself animated, active-minded, almost argumentative. Not only would he take his former place at a leap, but he did it with an assurance that I never observed in him previously.

His appearance changed no less. The colour I had thought hectic now blazed into a shade of red, the health of which I could no longer doubt. Burnt by the wind, excited and feeling an altogether new and expansive attitude toward people, he began to look healthy and active, though he always fell short of robustness.

Obviously his best energies were attracted elsewhere, and it was hardly shrewd to guess that Rhoda Lispenyard was the source of attraction.

And of Rhoda I saw very little for a month or two after she met Mr. Child. Her work kept her fairly busy. Her tilt with the editor of the *Boston Journal* stimulated the competitive side of her nature. While at first her impulse was to defend herself, she soon formulated the idea of doing a number of feature stories on successful women in the professions and in business, and this series occupied her time generally from November to June. There were interviews, pictures, and sometimes a little travel.

Her preoccupations alone did not keep her away from me, however, and she would find time to run out to Belmont to see Wentworth while I was elsewhere. When we did meet it was usually apparent that our former intimacy could not sustain itself.

One evening late in January I was preparing a lecture when I heard a motor stop at the door. My man having retired to his own quarters some time ago, I answered the knocker myself.

"Hello, Lee," cried Rhoda, as I opened. "May I come in?"

"Why, come in out of the cold, Rhoda. Don't be childish."

"I wasn't quite sure whether you'd want to see me," she said with mock timidity as I closed the door.

"May I take your things?"

"No, I'm not staying a minute."

"Well, come in the library, anyway."

We did so, and Rhoda sat down impulsively upon the floor in front of the fireplace. Reaching into her pocket, she pulled out some papers.

"I brought you this article," she said.

"Thanks, I see it's signed this time. Shall I read it now?"

"No, don't. Not now."

I put it on the desk and then went back to the divan. Rhoda threw her sealskin coat back over her shoulders and looked solemnly at the fire. Suddenly she smiled and broke into a gurgling laugh.

"What's so very funny?"

"It was this afternoon. Do you know Agnes Tillmore?"

"No, I don't—that is, I've never met her." She was the leading lady of a Boston stock company, an actress I had seen once or twice.

"She came in this afternoon while I was having a discussion with O'Flarity Child. He was in a terribly serious mood and it seemed as though all the washers had broken in the fountain of erudition and no one could shut it off. When Agnes came in he kept right on. Agnes listened to him patiently while she took off her gloves; then she stepped over to his chair and stroked the top of his head. O'Flarity finished his paragraph without trying to conceal his annoyance, and then looked up. Agnes was waiting for him; she swooped down with a resounding kiss. Then she turned to me: 'Isn't he a sweet thing!' she said."

"What did Mr. Child do?"

"Nothing, nothing. But you should have seen his face."

"Just fancy."

"He took his hat and ran, and I'm afraid I shan't see him for a week!"

"Would that be very serious, not to see O'Flarity Child for a week?"

"You've no idea! I can't explain the way that mere infant has taken hold of me. He sits down and tells me all his confidences as though I were an oracle. I don't know what to do about him, and I have a feeling that something should be done. Maybe it isn't fair for me

to talk this way to you, Lee, but I couldn't help it because you're the only real friend that I have."

"Count me your friend for as much or as little as you please, Rhoda."

It was not that she had anything to tell me. What she wanted was someone to talk to. She felt impending changes and wanted to grasp her old life tightly before it was taken away from her. Rhoda left as impetuously as she came, and after she had gone I found it hard to prepare my lecture.

I wanted to be sympathetic, but I could not throw myself into Rhoda's romance as seriously as though it were my own. I felt that she was insensitive to expect it of me—in fact, I have always thought women less sensitive than men—and at the same time I did not think it was necessary for her to know, at the moment, how I did feel. There was a possibility, I thought, that we might become friends again later, and I wished us to drift apart naturally for the next few years.

I had never thought that they would get on with each other. What could they have in common? I should have thought that Rhoda was too old for him and that she would have hated him as a matter of course, as she had every other young man I had persuaded her to meet. No doubt the accident of their meeting had a great deal to do with the success of it. I had not asked her to come and dine with the latest thing in eligible young men for a delightful girl of nearly thirty whose resistance to men approached the supernatural. They had simply collided, much to the momentary inconvenience of myself.

Probably the source of the attraction was what so often brings together friends commonly thought ill sorted, a strong-weak combination.

Not at first realizing the full significance of the affair, Rhoda felt strongly drawn to this young man whom she

insisted upon treating as though he were a great baby. She herself was by no means mature for her age, and that was one reason for her inability to distinguish between youthfulness and lack of sophistication. What was instantly attractive about him was that he was the sheltered inmate of an institution of learning and she was out in the world earning, if not her living, at least sufficient to subsist upon if need be. And he showed every inclination of remaining a student for the rest of his days.

He had absorbed enough of her environment during the years he studied at Arlington not to seem a stranger to her, and their having studied in the same school gave them a common ground for conversation and one fertile enough to divulge what they really thought and felt about life in general. His attitude of mind did not reveal the assurance of masculine superiority that offended Rhoda wherever she went; the solitude of his existence, his preserved naivete, and the suffering innocence of his character were all mines of unfailing charm.

To Rhoda, then, who of all things despised the semblances of the subjection of women, O'Flarity Child stood out in striking relief. He was a man of distinction beyond his years, and yet he was not ready to tell her that her place was to make a home for him. Women had always been more of an idea than a reality to him, and he had, in sympathy with what he thought the best wisdom of his generation, rationalized their place in society to one of equality limited only by physical fact. With most of the men she had met previously she had always felt in their conversation the view that her teaching or writing was not really in the outer world, and that her work would be dropped upon marriage. They were the natural bread-winners and the natural heads of their families to be.

Now Child had never thought of himself as a possible

family man. He eschewed domesticity in all its forms. To be sure he was a dutiful and grateful son but he never thought of a family life except in terms of his parents' generation. Rhoda erred in thinking his reaction toward her characteristic of his attitude toward women. He had none. A desire to marry had never entered his head, and women generally occupied no place in his scheme of things. They belonged to the excitement of life, to the non-intellectual activity of men who fought in the world where he intended to study. There was something monastic if not spiritual in the renunciations that he assumed on account of his frail health.

Rhoda attracted him because she was unlike the young women he had taught himself to avoid, and who had, quite naturally, always left him out. She was four years older than he, she had had more varied and vivid experience, and he found her more companionable than any woman he had ever met.

With Rhoda all was joy that spring. The fact that O'Flarity frankly stated his intention to remain single made her feel perfectly free to take the lead and hold it. She would pick him up in the sprightly roadster and they would fly out to the suburbs of an afternoon. I observed that the hardness toward people that had always shocked me in Rhoda seemed to be softening. She fought less, hated less, and began to get a great deal of joy out of living. Merely from watching her I was sure that she was playing the game perhaps unconsciously at rather high stakes.

Rhoda came more often to Arlington than she had since she studied there. Temporarily she ran out of stock with her famous women, and came out to interview some of our staff on the opportunities for women in the various professions. One day I met her in the library where I

had stopped to consult the catalogue, and she was busy in the very tray of cards I wished to consult.

"Hello, Rhoda," I said. "Are you merely looking up something as I am, or are you working here all afternoon?"

"Why do you want to know?"

"I thought that if you have a moment to spare we might run out to Belmont and have a drink before we settle down for the afternoon."

"Why, Lee, you're getting to be an impossible old toper!"

"Am I to understand by that that you accept my invitation without qualification?"

"Yes, of course."

We gathered our papers and books and drove out to Belmont.

"Is Went in?" she asked at once.

"No, he's in Boston, having a riding lesson."

"That's good; I want to talk."

"Oh, please do."

"My work is running down," she said as we made ourselves comfortable in the library. "I don't feel like it. I'm not doing as well as I did in the fall. I keep writing about these women but, although I'm doing better work and find it easier to get my interviews all the time, I'm losing interest."

"I'm terribly sorry you feel that way, Rhoda; I'm sure there's nothing in it. Can't you hold your interest somehow?" I had always urged her to keep on with the subject of women in the world; it seemed especially suited to her imagination and sympathy, and it gave her a coveted opportunity to put her most sincere emotion into what she wrote.

"No, Lee, I can't. I'm going to pieces."

"I haven't noticed it, Rhoda. But you don't keep me

in touch with your articles and you know I can't find them, on my own account."

"Stupid! If I had written anything I wanted you to see you couldn't possibly have escaped it."

"Probably it's only the spring, Rhoda."

"Yes, it makes me lazy and rebellious!"

"But you have nothing to rebel against but yourself."

"Do I need anyone else?"

"I've thought so for some time."

"Thanks," she said, and yielded a forced little laugh that made us both uncomfortable for a moment.

"Do you think I ought to marry, Lee?" she asked after a moment.

"Yes."

"Do you think I'd be happier?"

"I don't know. I suppose, because I've wasted my life in teaching mostly, I've everything mixed in terms of knowledge. You might be happier for the experience if you like knowledge enough to gain it at the cost of pain. Marriage has a way of making people like you and me more civilized. It disillusions our ignorance, and it necessitates the creation of new illusions. In between somewhere it gives you a moment of being natural—a moment just long enough to disgust you."

"Perhaps he doesn't want me, Lee. I believe I do love the boy. He's a mere child, a mere schoolboy. He's about six months older than Went, and not half so well-mannered. Imagine my being in love with O. F., Lee, and yet I think it's true. I haven't the slightest doubt of it any more. He's such a wonderful boy!"

"He certainly is," I admitted.

"And Lee, you know all that crazy talk about his having heart disease? It's all a lot of nonsense. I mean, he hasn't anything wrong with him at all. I made him go to a specialist in Boston. He had never seen anybody

except the family doctor in St. Louis, who hadn't examined him for five years. Isn't it incredible how stupid these highbrows can be about themselves!"

"Well, then, it's practically settled, isn't it?"

She nodded slowly. "I think so, but of course . . ."

"Rhoda," I said, taking her hand, "I want you to be so very happy. We shan't see much of each other during the next few years. I don't want to emphasize anything by withdrawing, you understand, but I want us to be able to be awfully good friends again later—perhaps better than ever."

"I know, Lee, and feel exactly the same myself."

Went came in stamping proudly with his riding boots, and relieved the atmosphere more than he knew. Mr. O'Flarity Child joined us at dinner, and we had no luck in urging them to stay.

That night I found it difficult to leave Wentworth after he had retired. At length he broke into tears:

"Rhoda is going to marry Google eyes, and we're not going to see her any more!" he sobbed.

"I'm afraid you're right about that, old man," I said.

"I hate her for it, and I hate him!"

"It's natural that you should feel that way, son, but if I were you I should try not to. It isn't altogether fair; a little reflection will convince you of that. Meanwhile exercise a little restraint and I'm sure you'll be happier."

It so happened that this was the kind of reply to which Went had grown accustomed; he had just reached the age where it gave him pleasure to predict such remarks for any given set of circumstances, and the comfort was therefore not commensurate with the amusement that he derived from them. Realizing my error, I tried again.

"Oh, Went, old man, don't cry about it! There are lots of good fish in the sea!"

"It's all right for you to say that, father," he said, pull-

ing himself together for a moment, "and I think there probably are, but when Rhoda tells me that it won't make any difference to us whether she marries Google eyes or not, I know it's a lie! She's changed already; she's gone!"

But in half an hour he was willing to let me read to him and in another he was asleep. And in the morning he was more interested in knowing something that I could not in the nature of things predict; namely, at precisely what age, and after how many lessons, would I let him ride his horse alone in the park.

In the middle of June, Rhoda and O'Flarity Child were married hastily by the City Clerk, and, after a trip to St. Louis, following commencement, they set sail, presumably the happiest couple in the world.

Rhoda admitted to me that she thought giving up journalism at that time a fatal mistake so far as her life, as distinct from Flarey's, was concerned. She had reached the point where her advancement would gain an accelerating momentum. How she had struggled for the first signed interviews in the famous women series! The others came so much more easily and finally, at the point where the famous women thought that an interview with her added to their fame, her interest, her power of expression, seemed to fail her. What eased her conscience was the fact that her love affair with O'Flarity Child preoccupied her mind. Could she have found a better excuse?

Then there was the problem of whether she should go abroad. Flarey, of course, had to go, and couldn't have married under any other conditions. And they had to marry, beyond argument.

She did manage, however, to pick up some connections as foreign correspondent for the *Tribune,* but of that I shall speak in its proper place—if such there be.

CHAPTER VIII

Marriage had the effect of making Rhoda both older and younger. The maturity that evaded her as long as she sought it directly entered into her life unnoticed. The parting of the ways came when, without being wholly conscious of it, she began living for others.

What is important to the young ceases to be of more than academic interest to the old. As life tires of the pleasures and ambitions of ten or fifteen years' standing, it looks up to other gods, other standards to strive for, and newer goods to live for. A mellow nature, in my view, is one that preserves toward life a freshness of touch as the years pass on.

Just what the old and the new are, it would seem to me, can have meaning only in individuals. They depend upon the context for their definition. For example I once had a student who, as a boy, had imitated and to some extent absorbed manners and morals belonging to the French environment in which he had lived as a youth. On returning to America he fought hard to preserve all these characteristics. When he reached thirty, however, these gallicisms lost their force and significance in his nature, and he became rather cold toward manifestations of French civilization. On the other hand I have known the opposite to occur, for an American brought up not far from Boston Common, ardently puritanical and hard-fisted, to find that, later in life, the softer Latin civilization seemed to him truer and more inspiring to the yearnings of his soul.

The first two years of Rhoda's marriage she always

thought the most joyful of her life. All sense of personality unfulfilled, of a career unrealized, seemed to leave her. She was completely preoccupied with O'Flarity Child, and they lived an almost spontaneous, idyllic life in France and England. The first year was spent at Oxford; the second at Paris. What her husband did besides take courses, I have never known, or what she did for that matter, more than make love to O'Flarity and keep house for him after a fashion. They were immensely fortunate in having such a long honeymoon, and by spending it perforce in foreign countries where they were naturally thrown back upon each other. Residence at the two universities prevented them from having the distractions of travellers in excessive doses, and the general preoccupation involved in O'Flarity's studies saved them from honeymooning too intensely.

It was all so much lovelier than they could have planned it. Rhoda adored O'Flarity and in coming to love him her whole nature seemed to change as though to make room for an emotional life she had previously missed. She began to be warmer and more sympathetic, not only toward him but toward others.

Her treatment of men, of course, underwent the most thorough change. No longer did she feel the necessity for guarding herself, for withholding her emotion. I noticed it at once in her letters to me. She would have said that she had always withheld her affection from me because she could never give all, and I might have been a victim of false hopes. But that was not the case; she never previously had such consideration for me or anyone else. Love came to her with great force during those two years, and in her adoration for O'Flarity she grew immensely. Through her effort to fathom his character she could not well avoid trying to fathom mine as she had never done before. Knowledge that builds the mind

rather than fills it comes by way of comparison. We get, usually, only information from books. And although Rhoda's marriage took her out of my life almost completely for six years, nevertheless, from her letters and the brief meetings that we had in 1914 and in 1917, I felt that our old friendship was repaid with a new love. And her affection touched me deeply. It is an honour to be loved by some men and women, if only from a distance.

This new warmth of hers had the effect of quickening her sensibility. It seemed as if all the channels of perception became deeper and clearer. She felt things more. The implications of the books she read, the significance of the philosophy she argued with O'Flarity, the faces of the people in the busses and tramways, all gave her something for reflection, something to be considered in accordance with her new feeling for life. With generous sympathy she wanted to touch those who met her without hurting them. Her old way of shunning people vanished; she was amazed to find that people did not always repulse her, as she had formerly believed, but that they attracted her.

O'Flarity did not change as rapidly under the influence of marriage, and I doubt whether he changed as much. Almost immediately his life seemed to divide itself in two. As a student he remained his Arlington self, but the facts of having a wife and living in more substantial quarters altered his leisure so completely that his personality divided itself. It was only later, when he ceased being primarily a student, that the influence of his marriage made itself felt in his work. He was more alive, more sensitive, but his understanding was not greatly altered. He did not, as a result of his experience, find that some book he had read years ago with great enthusiasm had a meaning new to him. His mind seemed to proceed very

much as before, and the influence that his wife had upon him was usually by way of some abstract, intellectual medium. When they quarrelled, he was immovable until Rhoda could reduce her complaint to a plausible theory. That, not the tears, was the beginning of the making-up and, when he tried to impress Rhoda with the importance of something, it took him ridiculously long because he could not express it with an emotional outburst.

Nevertheless, he was strongly influenced by Rhoda and the fact that there seemed to be nothing seriously wrong with his heart. Now, he felt joyously, there was no longer any need to restrict his action, to limit his plans, or to arrange life in such a way as to avoid the strenuous. He enjoyed his academic pursuits more because he did not feel that he clung to them as a last alternative, and his vision of his future life became coloured with the idea of a career and this was perhaps the clearest and deepest manifestation of his wife's influence.

She came into his life not only to fulfil it within, but as the ambassador from the world outside. He had said to her before they were engaged: "Do you know why your regard means so very much to me? Everyone I have ever known has recognized me only as a student, as a mind, as a competitor. You only have found something in me as a man, as a friend and companion." She had, as it were, taken him out of a monastery, and she put constantly before him her picture of the world as she had found it.

Her influence tended first to stimulate his imagination on things not altogether abstract. Flarey's mind had been habitually in the clouds. Rhoda brought him into contact with people and things and forced him to acquire a feeble practical sense. This increased markedly as the years passed until it finally overshadowed his powers of abstraction. First of all, quite naturally, it manifested itself in

matters of household economy and administration. Rhoda was too much of a modern woman to run a house adequately, and he found that he had to deal with situations that do not occur when a young man lives with his parents or in conventionally ordered dormitories. Rents had to be considered and landlords bargained with, and from the moment that their cottage had been rented, it seemed as if he had to use his practical judgment about something or other every day.

Then Rhoda wished him to learn how to meet people with more ease and insight than he had accustomed himself to employ when he lived alone. People entered into their married life with more significance than they had expected.

But chiefly Rhoda insisted that he develop an intuitive, practical way of handling situations where personality was involved. She wanted him to have a great career and she wanted him to be a man among men. She wished that people would accept O'Flarity at once upon the valuation she thought he deserved, and instinctively she sought little ways of bringing out his qualities and attainments at once. In this she was perhaps a little too journalistic; she often behaved as though she were giving an interview and, when taken to task for it, she would say that it was in one sense true, for she was the medium through which O'Flarity reached the world.

Returning early in 1914 an incident occurred on the steamer that, while it seemed of no significance then, reached out into the future. It had been a pleasant voyage up to within a day or so of New York when a comparatively rough night revealed the fact that Rhoda was the better sailor. The next morning she went out alone and took her chair with a book. It was a beautiful and calm day, the storm having passed over, and Rhoda read aimlessly, now and then laying aside her book. At length

an Englishman of about thirty-five got up from his chair and wandered up to Rhoda.

"Do you mind if I do some social climbing?" he asked.

"What do you mean?"

"May I sit down for a moment?"

"Certainly," said Rhoda. "I'm glad of the company."

"My name is Gilman," he said. "You've been so snobbish all the way over that you couldn't possibly have known it."

"Oh, you really don't think we've been snobbish, do you?"

"People have a right to be snobbish when they've been married only ten minutes."

"Am I supposed to tell you how long I've been married?"

"I'm sure you wouldn't. Still, I can guess."

They bantered on for a while. There seemed to be something attractive about Gilman. He could say the most utterly childish things in a way that indicated that his real interest lay beyond his literal expression.

"I've had a grand time dreaming about you," he said. "I've never seen a couple so interested in each other's conversation. It gave me a picture that I've never had before although I've thought myself a keen observer of married life. You're both so serious, so preoccupied with intellectual things."

"How do you know what we've been talking about?"

"You can't deny it."

"Suppose I said we were talking about apartments in New York?"

"No one would believe you."

"You know, what you just said has set me thinking. I wonder what marriage would be like without interest in one another's conversation. You think it quite abnormal, don't you?"

"Oh, altogether!"

"Are you married by any chance, I wonder?"

"No, but I once was."

"Well, then, it must be easy for you to judge."

"Not a bit of it, Mrs. Child. Two years of marriage is only a beginning." He paused and Rhoda looked up wondering whether he thought that the period of her marriage or whether that was the length of time he had himself experienced matrimony. He caught her eye, smiled, and continued. "In my case it was a very wretched beginning, and that was all there was to it. So you see my observation of marriage is not based wholly upon my own experience."

"Well," said Rhoda, "it certainly doesn't seem to me abnormal to take an interest in my husband's conversation."

That remark struck Gilman as humorous and he raised his eyebrows slightly, a reflex that Rhoda did not interpret accurately until he did it a second time.

"I hope to meet Mr. Child," he said, smiling pleasantly. "I have no doubt that he's very informing. But it takes two to carry on these long dialogues, and I can readily understand how delightful it must be. You are long married?"

"How long do you think?"

"Perhaps fifteen minutes instead of ten."

Rhoda was puzzled. She didn't know whether to regard his jesting talk as something to be resented or whether to yield to her impulse to accept it congenially.

"I'm going to see how my husband is," she said, getting up. "He ought to do better out here in the air."

"May I escort you to your cabin?" he asked, getting up and offering his arm elaborately.

"Thank you," she murmured instinctively and, taking

his arm to spare him the embarrassment of having made an awkward gesture, they strolled into the cabin.

"I should like to see more of you some time," he said with hesitation and sincerity, and then added as a matter of pure form, "and I should like to meet your learned husband. I'm sure you are both too charming to keep always to yourselves."

Rhoda bowed and they parted. She felt dazed for a moment and as she entered the stateroom she found Flarey dressed and ready to go out. She kissed him warmly.

"Hello," he said, "I was just going out to look for you. Everything seems peaceful again and remarkably calm."

"I came to get you, but let's wait a minute."

"Why?"

"I want that Mr. Gilman to get out of the way."

"And what's wrong with him, Rhoda? I haven't spoken to him but he looks inoffensive enough."

"He is, Flarey, but I've been talking to him and he just came in with me. I want him to get clear of the door."

When they did go out on deck, Gilman was not to be seen. Rhoda sat down with relief.

"I am sorry I was childish about it," said Rhoda.

"About what?"

"About meeting this Mr. Gilman."

"Oh, I didn't notice it."

"You see, I somehow never met people like him in that easy way before I married. I used always to hold them off, to refuse them an opening. To-day for the first time I felt that I was not impervious to other men. That was what took my breath away. Stupid, wasn't it?"

"Let's cultivate him, Rhoda, if you like him. He may be worth knowing. It's amazing how fast acting some

people are. He seems to have made a complete hit at once."

"I don't understand it, Flarey. He has an ingenuous charm that I can't combine with his polished sophistication. Here he is now."

O'Flarity glanced up and saw Mr. Gilman approaching them.

"I'm glad you're feeling better, Mr. Child," he said. There was a vacant chair and he sat down with them. They talked intermittently, all three, for about an hour. The conversation turned to university life and how it differs from normal life, and Gilman chatted unaffectedly of the days he had spent at Cambridge, without, however, mentioning anything that gave a clue to what he was or had been, or why he chanced to be crossing the ocean. They were not far from their journey's end and Rhoda experienced satisfaction in the fact that they were not likely to find themselves together again. Once again did she confront him alone on that trip. The meeting was so brief that she could not remember how they reached the subject so quickly, but she recalled that he seemed to be looking into her face searchingly.

"But there are no such women in England," he had said.

This incident impressed Rhoda perhaps unduly. She would often catch herself recalling the details of it. She remembered, years afterwards, that his sympathy had an insinuating quality about it. She felt that she had drawn this quite incoherent character to her by the sheer force of her personality. He was older and more experienced than she, but she felt that she could have attracted him. O'Flarity had always possessed respect for her mind (and so had I, though she never believed it) but this man suggested, unlike any other she had met, that her personality held him in admiration.

Such an attraction was too strong and based upon too little in friendship or association for her to trust it. She had resisted efforts on his part to get some assurance that she would receive him in America, and he made no advances to O'Flarity Child. To the latter, the whole affair seemed unsatisfactory. He was drawn to the man by the same charm he possessed for his wife, but knowing that Gilman took no real interest in him, he did nothing to prolong the acquaintance. He did think that Rhoda was excessively concerned about the flutter that he seemed to arouse.

"You're foolish," he would say, "if you like him at all, not to invite him to see us if he happens to find himself near Boston."

"There was a time," said Rhoda, "when I should have thought it necessary to see a thing like this through to the end, but I'm so perfectly happy as things are that I'm naturally glad to have him out of the way."

"Funny," said O'Flarity, "I don't quite get the idea."

"No wonder, darling, it isn't an idea."

I had persuaded them to stop with me at Belmont while they decided what they were going to do. Wentworth was out of the way at the time. I had sent him to camp for a part of that summer. The discrepancy in our ages made our close companionship unfortunate for both of us, and particularly for him; and, while I disliked boys' camps generally, I thought this one harmless and desirable for Wentworth, because it gave him an opportunity to associate with boys of his own age. This I thought particularly advantageous in the playful mood of a summer vacation.

It was during the first days of the war; all was excitement and distrust. I found a quiet place in Bretton Woods, N. H., where I managed to carry on, in my own way, quite undisturbed. Before leaving, however, I

had spent a good deal of time trying to get O'Flarity a permanent appointment at the university. It had been the custom with us, and there was no precedent to the contrary, to take on the staff any man returning from the Dunhill Memorial Fellowship. The university seemed to take back what it gave. While at first sight it seemed a little ungenerous. I always used my influence in favour of the custom, because I thought it altogether desirable to have lecturers with academic experience abroad and because it increased the value of the fellowship. It was not wholly prejudice, therefore, that made me fight for O'Flarity Child; I had done so for all the Dunhill beneficiaries. But it happened that we were overstocked with young tutors and instructors, not only in philosophy, but in other subjects as well, and I could not find any means to persuade the president to acquire him. We were short of funds, an appeal had to be made for money, and in the face of this appeal we had to present the appearance of abject poverty and dejection.

When Rhoda and O'Flarity came I lost very little time in getting out of town. Likely enough that explained my month at Bretton Woods quite as much as the war. I knew they wanted to be alone. I had done what I could and there was nothing more for me to do, and I knew that a man of his recognized distinction would have no difficulty in establishing himself elsewhere.

It was absorbing, however, to see them, if only for a day or so, and observe the changes that had occurred. Rhoda, of course, I thought more changed than O'Flarity. The boy is father of the man in a sense that seems to have no parallel in the life of a woman. When the first thrill of knowing that he had no need to treat himself as an invalid passed off, he readily sank back into his old habits. I never saw him use his body either vigorously or efficiently; he could never attain normal co-

ordination in the simplest things. Though he tried, he could never learn to drive an automobile, and his use of his hands was so limited that he sometimes startled those who happened to be near him. "Should you mind opening this tin of tobacco for me?" he would ask, "I don't quite see how it works."

Glad as I was to see them, I was equally glad to get away. The first crisis in their life together occurred while they were stopping at my home; it was one that brought their personalities into conflict for the first time seriously. O'Flarity Child had every reason to believe that he would be called to Arlington at the end of two or three years, specifically on the retirement of Professor Overman, who had let it be known that he had no intention of instructing the youth of New England one day longer than needful to secure his pension. Now the president advised Child to take a vacant chair in a very obscure college in Michigan. He wanted him to have experience in lecturing, and thought that being a temporary professor of philosophy, in a school that boasted of a department of one in that subject, would offer more varied experience than being an assistant somewhere in the East. It would be hard for him to avoid the dangers of excessive specialization at Arlington, and the president thought that this engagement would be a fine experience as a sort of philosophical internment.

O'Flarity, who was anxious to digest and reconsider the fruits of his European study, and perhaps consider his first ventures in writing, inclined favourably to President Moorhouse's plan; and he felt that in following the president's advice he would strengthen his chances to join our staff. Rhoda, on the other hand, was strongly against it. She had married on a contract of equality, and, looking at the matter impersonally, she thought that her career was as important as his. There was no reason, surely,

why his residence should be hers any more than her residence his.

While they were abroad she had written very little indeed. Besides a very few articles that appeared in the *Tribune,* five in all, she had nothing to show for her time except a manuscript of impressions, set down in the form of a journal, which, though it contained undoubtedly plausible literary material, possessed no market. But neither of them had worried about this. It was the season to take a little time off, to improve their leisure. Rhoda should have preferred O'Flarity not to plunge so deeply into his studies, but his sense of noblesse oblige demanded that the Dunhill Fellowship be pursued seriously, and his career had demanded the acceptance of the fellowship.

Now, however, all this was changed. The honeymoon was over, and Rhoda felt that she had to justify herself by going earnestly and energetically to work. She had idled enough and she did not wish to spoil the joy of that great love by making it the price of her self-respect.

And she felt that going west for three years might seriously damage her future. It would be hard enough to pull herself together. As it was almost everybody had forgotten her; people in journalistic offices move about restlessly and she could hardly hope to be remembered any longer.

Neither of them suggested parting; they were too much in love for that. And once she was certain that O'Flarity thought it best to go, Rhoda did not try to keep him in Boston. After all, she thought but not without misgiving, his was to be the great career and not hers. Though she was in most respects the stronger and well knew it, she knew equally well that her career had suffered too much already through her inability as a younger woman to give it direction.

She felt that he needed her, and that he needed her in

a way in which he was incapable of helping her. The marriage of the strong and the weak may be powerful, but it excludes the refinement of nicely reciprocating relationships. Already she had been at work in trying to stimulate his arrested practicality, in teaching him to meet people effectively, and in urging him to formulate his plans for a career. And this had been difficult because from the first she had shrunk from the career of a university parasite, as she used to call them. It seemed to her no career at all, no reaching out into the world. But she noted with pleasure his progress in these things, and she regretted not a little that his hand could never reach over and help her with her career. The thought never occurred to him, and besides, he did not know anything of that side of life. His interests, she mused, were narrow after all, his grasp upon life insecure. He did not understand the real sources of his knowledge, for he had dealt with the symbols so long in acquiring his learning that he lost track of their purpose. He resembled an expert accountant who examines the books of any concern but who could not carry on a business.

Rhoda yielded, and yielded gracefully, but she knew that she was making a sacrifice that could not be fully appreciated, and that offended her sense of justice. There are those who can yield and still keep on fighting. She went with him to Michigan planning to find some way of working out her problem. She hated the life and the people there; she knew that she would have to live in an unnatural retirement, but she planned to improve her idleness by working at something or other that would clarify her mind and enhance her ability to write.

This she found difficult. "If I improve my style any more," one of her letters said, "I shall never be able to sell another story. Don't you know how you get to be literary when you set out to be clear?" I would answer,

"For God's sake use this opportunity to write something. Why not try a novel or something like that?" "No use, Lee, I can't feel those big things inside of me. I cannot sustain any impulse. It's only the little features that I'm crazy about."

And when the three years were over she had another blow. Just as the appointment to Arlington finally came and their plans were set, the United States declared war. O'Flarity, of course, could not restrain himself from going at once. He did not think much about it; he did most of his thinking about the war after he was in the service; but he felt at once that it was his duty to go.

Rhoda gave up her plan to return to journalism in the fall of 1917. She could not bear the thought of living alone in Boston or the suburbs while O'Flarity was in the service. I encouraged her to come on the theory that it was a good time to begin, or to recommence, in any occupation, and a good plan to keep busy while one's husband was away; but my arguments availed little. She decided to put The Orchards at Chester in order, and live there for the duration of the war. This move seemed to me so irrational that I was glad when she invited me for a week or so in September. O'Flarity had just joined his regiment.

"Why didn't you bring Wentworth?" she asked the very first thing as I got off the train.

"He's not fit for visiting," I said. "You can't treat him as a child and you can't treat him as a youth. He's at the age now when he thinks it's thoroughly disgraceful to have any emotion, especially toward women. He used to adore you, you know, but for the last few months it makes him ashamed when your name is mentioned."

"He'll get over it. I'm glad of one thing, and that is that he's too young and you're too old for this war."

I could find no answer for this, and we said very

little that I recall until, after dinner, we went out on the porch. It was a beautiful autumnal evening with the moon shining through a smoky mist. I observed that some building had been going on and that the yard seemed to be in disorder.

"You know, Rhoda," I said, "you're always changing something. You're never satisfied to let things be. I've not been here since the death of Uncle Tad, when you were not busy digging or building, antiquing or modernizing. The old man had a lovely way of letting things rot naturally. It was a sort of dignified rotting, you know."

"You're travelling on dangerous ground," she said.

"You don't ask me to tread lightly? Not you, surely."

"No, I don't. I'll tell you, Lee."

"Please do."

"Well, I don't know whether I should or not. I don't know whether it's fair to O'Flarity."

"Tell me," I said slowly, "what is fair to O'Flarity and leave out the rest."

"It isn't his fault. He meant well. It isn't his fault anyway. I guess the war is what's wrong. I feel just terribly; it's years since I've felt so out of sorts. Do you know what I'm doing to this place? I'm turning it into a farm that pays, that produces, and I'm going to run it myself for the duration of the war."

"Gracious!"

"You think it funny?"

"No, not a bit, but I haven't got accustomed to the idea yet. It's rather a sudden change, Rhoda."

"Yes, it is. I feel simply miserable; everything that I counted on has gone down to the ground, or at least the two things that I counted on most have failed me. I'm worse off in my profession than I ever was, and O'Flarity is gone."

There were tears in her eyes. I took her hand and foolishly tried to comfort her.

"Rhoda, you're not in the mood for me to tell you that O'Flarity is all that matters. But for the moment I think it true, and I think that his chances for a speedy and healthy return are really very good. It's just inconceivable that this thing will go on much longer."

"I know that for the duration of the war O'Flarity is all that matters. You may be very sure that my love for him is strong enough to carry me through the war. Nevertheless, powerful as my love is, it isn't sufficient to keep me from feeling that my life is a wreck. I can't see anything ahead. First I left in 1912, when I should have stayed, but I was in love and I knew that O'Flarity would take the Dunhill. Then in 1914 I went west against my better judgment. Now, just as I was going back to Boston, the war is on and O'Flarity is called away. . . . Lee, you will pardon my emotion, won't you?"

"Why don't you go to Boston now? It might be a good time to get a footing. A good many newspaper men will be out."

"Lee, I haven't the heart to do it. I sometimes think that I should do it, but I just can't. My emotion is too great. With O'Flarity away in the service I couldn't see myself taking up the war work that is being doled out to women. Can you fancy me selling bonds or collecting money, or throwing myself into people's private affairs in the dubious name of social service? Lee, the one thing for me to do in this war, is to make this sterile farm of mine produce. It's good, healthy work, and nothing is more essential. I can pick up some of the physically unfit to work for me, and a year from now, I assure you, there will be a harvest."

"Rhoda, it's incredibly officious for me to try to cheer

you while O'Flarity is away, but I really think your situation is comparatively easy."

"If only men could understand. You, who have had every opportunity to know me, you, Lee Seebohm, can sit there and talk to me like that! Lee, when O'Flarity came into my life, I tried to help him in every way to fulfil his destiny—big or little, whatever it was. No sacrifice was too great or too small. I did help him; he's a bigger man to-day as he goes overseas to be shot than he ever was. He understands himself; he understands people; he understands his career and what he has before him. But O'Flarity couldn't do that for me; he couldn't help me to realize the best that is in me. My soul seemed to satisfy him just as it was. He couldn't see the need to keep me forging ahead. And the result is that this war caught us at just the wrong point. War means the survival of the unfit; Flarey goes and I remain.

"Lee, it isn't only that I've lost confidence in my profession and lost my husband, I've lost confidence in myself and don't know where to turn."

CHAPTER IX

The minute, almost, that the armistice was signed, Rhoda let the contracts for the building of her new home. She had intended the house as a surprise for Flarey, thinking that the building would take no longer than it would take him to return from France. A year previous she had purchased ground in Belmont, and she had been in consultation with an architect ever since. The plans having been agreed upon finally, she waited only for the end of the war to start building, and their home was to be finished late that spring. The surprise of it, however, lost some of its climax, for the armistice found Flarey at Camp Dix, New Jersey. Late in December he came home an adoring and adorable husband for the Christmas holidays.

They went south almost immediately and remained there until the University, which had been paying his salary and advancing him in scholastic honours with a great showing of patriotism during his service, beckoned him to return from Palm Beach to relieve Professor Akinside, who had deferred his sabbatical meanderings until the termination of European hostilities.

The building was not ready until May, and I presented myself at a rather scantily attended house-warming on the fifteenth. Never after that did I think that Rhoda's effort to express herself adequately had been altogether in vain. In some respects the house was the architectural realization of her fondest dreams, the picture of what she expected the rest of her life to be.

It was not a very large house. Externally it resembled many another. The general form was colonial, but much of the trimming, and the colour and sprightliness of the

landscaping, prevented it from achieving the cold, chaste restraint of the eighteenth century style. The detail was of course in perfect keeping, but there was too much of it. It looked as though someone had taken a fine old Colonial house and poured icing over it.

Rhoda had given more attention to the interior. The house, which was nearly square, was divided in two, front and back. The front was all one room with a high ceiling; the back had a kitchen in the middle and two offices, alike in every respect, in each corner. I don't recall ever having been upstairs, but there was a delightful sleeping porch for Flarey, who was still alleged to have delicate health.

The furnishings in the living room were completed in the interests of colour rather than form. Probably because Rhoda selected in the spring and thought of the summer, there was a great deal of wicker with bright, chintz curtains. The hangings were red and gold, and the light coming from three sides permitted no shadows. Her piano, and the rest of the furniture she had placed in her Boston apartment, came out of storage at last, but these pieces always seemed to me startled at finding themselves in Belmont. It is hard for me to describe precisely what the vivid colours were that marked the upholstering and other things, not because they lacked intensity, but because there were so many of them that in the large room they neutralized one another. What I do recall are the wicker chairs with their friendly footstools, the piano with its Indian shawl, a vigorous picture that Aberdean Duke gave for a wedding present, all very pleasant and momentarily stimulating but robbing each other of any right to a permanent remembrance. If one must be impressionistic, one should be economical about it.

Her architect had done a good deal of complaining about her layout, especially in the limited and slighted kitchen and servant quarters. He had a hard time per-

suading her not to build a fairly large house with merely a kitchenette, and no maid's room whatever. Her lawyer, my respected brother Hallam, could not contain himself with contempt for a woman who insisted upon building while prices were abnormally high, but Rhoda opposed him more valiantly and more effectively than the architect, who had at least achieved a compromise here and there. She told my brother that rents were high, too, and that she might as well spend a good deal more and have something to show for her money when prices became normal again.

Something to show she certainly did acquire; a two-family house could not have been more completely dualistic. It was made for two people having utterly different interests and preparing to preserve the utmost personal privacy.

For both of them it was a first experience at establishing a home in any permanent sense. Abroad their mood as well as their residence was one of a temporary nature, and in Michigan, although they lived there for almost three years, they never thought of their quarters as anything more than a momentary expedient. It was therefore with great hope and delight that Rhoda made her plans and carried them out with O'Flarity Child. His library and her few books were collected with emotion and put in their separate offices. There was the purchasing of rugs and pictures, the selection of a thousand little things.

Their joy, however, was mingled with sadness. They felt, Flarey more than Rhoda, that these errands should have been done seven years ago.

O'Flarity acted as though the whole thing particularly bored him. "I shall certainly never move again. After the trouble of getting really established is over, you won't be able to budge me. I once had the ambition to go to one of the big universities, now I'm satisfied to teach at Arlington until I die."

He was not a man to take much interest in physical life. Even his library gave him no pleasure either of possession or creation. He would always throw his books away and begin all over again. He read extensively and continually and with such rapidity that he needed to use a reference library always. What was the use in trying to compete with the great university libraries anyway?

Rhoda, on the other hand, though she missed domestic competence by no narrow margin, attached herself to her possessions, to books and furniture, to porcelain and pictures. Once a book or work of art fully impressed her, she did not like to part with it. She liked to put it in a place where it reflected the part that it played in her life. Although I sometimes thought Rhoda's taste a caution in the proverbial sense, nevertheless I liked this about it, that it was never accidental and that it always accomplished what it set out to do, whether or not it lacked form or dignity.

O'Flarity at first would complain bitterly about her arbitrary way of decorating but, when it came to an argument, it usually turned out that he had been shocked by a lack of convention in something or other and had no better solution of the problem to offer. Rhoda had little patience for this timidity. O'Flarity was incapable of fear in the things nearest his heart, so why should he object to her bold solutions of practical problems? She called this period of their lives the matrimonial reconstruction, which I thought something of a mistake because it called undue attention to a break in the continuity of their lives. It brought into prominence facts that they might have overlooked in the hope that time would soften them.

For the war had a formative influence, it seemed to me, upon the characters of most people. It sharpened their characteristics; it made them more definitely of one colour or another. Even Wentworth was touched by it. He was

eighteen the year of the armistice and he had probably never read a newspaper while the world was at peace. He began carrying himself as he thought a soldier should, and he would imitate minor forms of military manners as though he thought a soldier the only possible thing for a young gentleman to be, which indeed it was during the only portion of his life that he consciously looked forward to being a young gentleman. It became extremely difficult to teach him history; he thought quite naturally that the only function of a state was to carry on war successfully, and his notions of politics were so limited that it took a year or two of peace before I could find the courage to start in all over again at the beginning. He would swell his chest, and observe the military qualities of other young boys; he would ask again and again how old he would have to be before I should let him go. But, after all, his playing soldiers and sticking pins in maps did very little real harm, and perhaps six months after the armistice he worried me by his rounding shoulders and his tendency to be overly studious for a boy of his age.

With O'Flarity Child, however, the effect was deep and lasting. At first it seemed to me that he made a great deal of his uniform when the war was over. People began asking him when he was going back to mufties. Then it appeared that a change of raiment didn't help him any. Rhoda had started him on the way toward getting on with people; the army added to that a little skill in commanding them. I went to his first lecture at Arlington hoping to hear some philosophical study that was the result of a great deal of reflection and enforced idleness. He marched up to the lecture table in full uniform with his boots shining and gave, in very clear and simple words, a lecture the substance of which could hardly have been avoided by anyone who had given the subject the slightest consideration. I had thought that this was accidental, but, coming back a

few months later, I found that the parade-ground method of his original delivery stuck to him. He addressed his students as though they were incapable of understanding anything that he did not explain.

"Why don't you give them something for their time?" I asked him at the close.

"What do you mean, Lee?" he asked indignantly.

"You lecture as though you thought you had a lot of children before you. You haven't given them anything they can't find in any one of half a dozen books; and they're supposed to be familiar with all of them."

"They are a lot of children, aren't they?"

"You certainly can't expect them to grow up unless somebody weans them, Flarey."

"You're an idealist, you educate so vigorously that there are hardly more than a dozen men in the course of the year who dare sign up with you. Now my style is not inflexible, I go just as far as I can carry a reasonable majority of the students with me. When the atmosphere of the war is dispersed, I shall stop talking like a drill sergeant and try to be in sympathy with the new atmosphere, whatever it is. But my books aren't that way."

Nor were they. Two books of his were already published: *The Foundations of the Modern Movement in Philosophy* and *The Feud with Psychology,* and I think these two books best realize his genius and delineate his limitations. In no sense creative, and constructive only in so far as they contribute to historical knowledge, each is a fine study of its problem and a lucid piece of writing. Though they were in most respects brilliant, they fell down lamentably in their inability to free themselves from the actual labour of research. They were overwrought with footnotes; they were snowed in with allusions and bibliography. O'Flarity had read exceptionally widely, and he was unable to leave out the smallest bibliographic detail.

He was incapable of forgetting anything. It was a task, and perhaps not a gratuitous one, to read either of these books; they were more than stimulating in an historical way but, when you set them down at last, there was nothing left for reflection. What of it? you would ask yourself at every showing of unexpected learning. He seemed to me an exalted example of the futility of much in our educational system.

And yet he was far from futile, sterile though his mind might be. He was everywhere talking, lecturing, and being made much of. While he had formerly receded from society he now went out to conquer whenever an opportunity presented itself. In the war he had ceased from being a student; he had been a man among men, and as such he had won his promotions. The war had strengthened the practicality and the will to ambition that Rhoda had been urging upon him, and he took hold of his career as though it were a political campaign.

As for Rhoda's transformation due to the war, it brought out sharply the fact that she was by nature an irreconcilable. From her farm at Chester she came back less willing than ever to compromise on the smallest point, more inclined than ever to refer everything to herself. She recommenced, in a small way, her old journalistic work, and she felt more keenly than since she married, that there was something, she knew not what, radically wrong with her life. It fairly haunted her mind. She had done her share of war work, but she knew that only living alone on the farm had made it possible. She despised the reactions of people to the war. It put individuals in groups; men became one with men in whose principles they had no belief. And she despised these groups, the camps of radicals, pacifists, chauvinists, and pro-capitalists. She went gingerly about from office to office with her

new work, being told that this was untimely and that antagonizing.

Hers was a personality that wavered between the excesses of optimism and pessimism, and more than anyone I knew did she reflect what seemed to me the most accurate reaction of a certain type of mind to the war. In the beginning she was so optimistic, so willing to sacrifice: in the end nothing was left but heartbreak and the bitterness of a vain question—what was it all given for, anyway?

But, although she seemed utterly given over to discouragement, with her new house and her husband back from military duty she threw the last of her youth into an effort to rehabilitate herself. She was then only thirty-five and seemed to be at the height of her powers. She was more beautiful than she had ever been; her marriage had given her face more responsiveness; it had deepened her eyes and softened her mouth.

Wentworth had almost forgotten how warmly as a child he had loved Rhoda and how tenderly she had taken care of him. They began to be great chums; they rode together and played tennis and golf. Frequently I would find Rhoda and Went enjoying their leisure either in my library or in hers. My son had suddenly overcome most of the feeling of shame that he possessed a few years previous with regard to women. I found him dressing with minute care, and trying to be chivalrous in small ways. It was only a phase but it amounted to foppishness while it lasted. After a few futile and painfully embarrassing attempts, he finally produced a pair of sideboards that made people call him Pendennis, and it took a great effort on my part to treat these romantic objects as seriously as they were intended.

Wentworth was actually a freshman at Harvard that year and I had him take rooms in Cambridge as a matter

of course. But some time before he came home for the Christmas recess he told me that he thought that he would not reside in Cambridge during his sophomore and junior years, though he would doubtless go back to the Yard as a senior. The week-ends in Belmont I thought so prolonged that he must have found life dull in Cambridge. His plan to return for two years having originated without any suggestion from me, and having fundamentally no other reason than the desire to study in the quiet of my library, I did not argue with him but made arrangements to have him come back home.

It may seem absurd that it was necessary to make arrangements, but I found that he was beginning to have a personality that needed recognition in a physical and material way. The idea that there can be no house large enough for two heads of families had been demonstrated false by Rhoda, and I was to some extent the victim of her healthy contagion. Went must feel at home. Then almost nineteen, he would be under my roof at most five years longer, at the end of which I shall doubtless thrust him out whether he wishes to go or not. For I cannot believe that it is good for youth to live with age too long. It is not wholly a matter of years. It is one of income, of morals, of manners. But during the time that I thought it desirable for him to use my home as his own, I wanted him to learn how to live, so that when the time came for him to set up alone he could do so. I, therefore, in the fall of 1919 as he began his sophomore studies, gave up my library and music room to serve him as much as me, and fitted out an office upstairs—just a little room with a table and chair—for my own use temporarily.

One warm April day the following spring I chanced to look out of the window of this room and saw Rhoda and Wentworth approaching the house, and as they were carrying golf bags for the first time that season, my glance

lingered for a moment to accustom myself to the idea. A few minutes later Jenkins announced tea and I asked him to serve me alone where I was. It had seemed to me as I glanced out of the window that Wentworth was at an age when a third party would be hard for him to manage, and that he had need to learn to entertain without my assistance.

They did not wholly agree with me, however, and presently Rhoda came upstairs, Wentworth having excused himself to change for dinner. I was glad to see her and she knew it.

"Why didn't you come down and have tea with us, you old muddle-head?"

I explained my reasons truthfully.

"Well, you are certainly an extraordinary parent!"

"Perhaps so," I said, and we went down together.

"Should you like to walk over with me, Lee?"

"Let's."

It was green and beautifully warm. We stopped now and then to pick a flower or two.

"You know, Lee, it's hard not to be hopeful in the spring."

"When you are as old as I, my dear, you are not easily moved by anything, and almost never by nature."

"You have no need to be moved. I confess I was thinking only of myself. You know I sometimes think you were right in urging me to drop journalism and take up serious writing on my own account. I may have wanted to all along, but haven't ever had the courage to do it. A little practical success, a little going into print now and then is enough to sustain me."

"How are things going now?"

"Picking up. There's something awfully stimulating about it, but the ups and downs of it are very unsatisfactory at my age. Do you know what I'm thinking of doing

now? I'm trying to work my way into a job as literary editor. There are going to be a lot of changes in the *Tribune,* and I'm planning to storm the place."

"I'd love to see you handling the book section, Rhoda. It's of all things the job on a newspaper that I think you most suited for, not actually perhaps as much as potentially, if you know what I mean."

"Exactly, but as much as the other fellow probably, and once you got the idea that your future lay in it, you would soon hump your back and get down to work.

"Let's hurry a little, Lee, O'Flarity may have students this afternoon and he'd like us to meet them."

We quickened our pace.

"Yes, Lee, I'm not mentioning it to anybody but I'm trying awfully hard for this book review business. Here I am near Arlington, not far from Harvard, and in a society of university people. I ought to be able to raise the general level of the thing by handing out the work judiciously. I'm thinking of our new house as the centre of a new circle. I suppose every wife does that. I want O'Flarity to be surrounded with altogether delightful people."

"What does he think about it?"

"He doesn't think about it at all yet. He has a regular afternoon when the students in his courses come and now and then he has friends in Boston, but we're going to do things a bit more vigorously presently. I must hurry and get a cook so that we can have people to dinner."

We were soon at the door. On going in we found O'Flarity seated in an easy chair with half a dozen students grouped about the room. He looked his old self for a moment except that he held a pipe in his hand and his eyebrows knit together with a determination that I thought a new characteristic of his. We were introduced. Rhoda in sport clothes looked so foreign to the gathering that

one of the more sober-minded youths looked at his watch.

"We were having an old discussion, Mr. Seebohm, on the subject of education," said Flarey as we entered.

"Keep right on," I said. "I'm glad to listen."

"Well," said O'Flarity, "I was in the midst of answering Mr. Jeffries who had asked whether it was not wiser to throw out everything we have in the way of classical learning, and start boys and girls from the beginning of knowledge, instead of trying to give them the training, the knowledge, and the wisdom of their fathers as something to start with."

"I think that's a better statement of my question," said Jeffries with a smile, "than my own wording of it."

"This all grew out of the question as to whether or not Latin and Greek can be dispensed with," said a pretty young girl, for my special benefit. I bowed my thanks.

"And my answer was something like this," Flarey went on. "I don't think you can throw out everything of the past even if it were desirable to do so, which I don't believe for a moment."

Rhoda had just finished lighting a cigarette and, putting her matches carefully on the mantel-shelf, she swung round; she put her hands deep into the generous pockets of her tweed skirt and said very rapidly indeed:

"I don't think there's any question as to its being desirable to scrap everything and start fresh. I don't see any reason why we should have to spend most of our lives fighting against the traditional foolishness of our fathers and mothers."

"That's it!" cried Jeffries, slapping his knee vehemently. O'Flarity took his wife's statement as if it had been made by one of the students, which threw Rhoda further left in the opposition. It was difficult for me to see how O'Flarity could have received it otherwise, for it struck him right in the face. His control I thought perfect. Rhoda, appar-

ently, had no conception of the possible sentiments that arose. O'Flarity had been talking to his students in a pleasantly argumentative way, and his wife, coming into the room unexpectedly, had joined the opposition as a matter of course and fairly vigorously.

"Well"—he had a way of picking himself up with that word—"it may be that there is an evolution of the mind as well as the physical side of the race. Physically, we're helpless at birth; so are we mentally. And mental maturity comes after a much longer period of nursing. That's stating it in too general terms, but I think you get some impression, without my insisting upon an analogy, of the hopelessness of man trying to get an education of any kind without a consideration of what comes before."

"But it isn't exactly the nursing part of it that we mean, is it, Mr. Jeffries? What we're worried about is that even in our adult education, we keep on looking into the past when we ought to be looking into ourselves, or working with facts in the laboratories. That's why we're unproductive." She spoke to no better purpose the second time. O'Flarity had realized the fallacy of his nursing idea as soon as it got out of his mouth.

"Never mind the matter of production, Mrs. Child," I ventured, taking the role of peacemaker. "Education should be a preparation for production."

"No, one learns to produce by producing," said the pretty girl.

"Quite so, if you please, but that merely means, in this argument, that producing can be regarded as an experience. And the experience, not the production as such, educates. And, as I was saying, I don't see how people can get very far without a good grasp of common knowledge and without something in the way of disciplinary training. Now one way to get both together is by going in for the classics."

"I think I'd better be going over toward Arlington," said one of the students, and the individualism of the new generation to the contrary notwithstanding, they all scampered out presently.

"I say, Rhoda," said O'Flarity when they had gone, "you rather turned things into a free-for-all!"

"I didn't mean to do it, darling," said Rhoda, kissing him. "I'll never do it again."

"And your ideas about education are a little naive. They need to be toned down; they need further consideration."

"That's true, Flarey, but I've taught as much as you have, and I like to say things straight out."

"Won't you have supper with us, Lee?"

"I should be delighted, but Rhoda tells me you have no cook. Suppose you come over and dine with us."

"Thanks, no. I've seen enough of youth for one day, with all due respect to your son."

"He's really very well trained, Flarey; he wouldn't bother you," said Rhoda.

"Well, let's go to town, the three of us, if we have no supper here."

We were shortly all three crowded into the front and only seats in Rhoda's old speedster, once so smart, now in a state of noisy disintegration.

"I'll not go by the university in this rig," she said, and O'Flarity replied significantly: "I'm glad you have some respect for our alleged dignity." After a spin through the country we ran into Boston and stopped at the Copley-Plaza. We were all in a better humour; I had almost forgotten that I had been present at a family tilt.

"Darling," said Rhoda, after we had ordered, "you haven't asked me what I did to-day."

"That's quite true. Well, what did you do? Did you get a cook?"

"No."

"Did you get a butler?"

"We can't afford one."

"Did you get a maid?"

"No."

"Did you see that impossible plumber?"

"No, again."

"Well, you must have been out at St. Louis seeing your mother-in-law."

"I'm not sure but I think I've been getting a regular job."

"Well, I'll be damned! Congratulations!"

"What have you been doing to-day?"

"Well, I delivered a lecture, prepared two, did some work on my book, entertained the kids in the afternoon."

"Didn't you remember to see the plumber even?"

"Why, no."

"Nor see about cooks?"

"No."

"Well, it looks as if neither of us accepted the duties of home life quite seriously."

"Lee, how have you managed to come through without a secretary?" Flarey continued as the waiter brought our soup.

"I never needed one."

"That's incredible."

"Why on earth should I have a secretary?"

"You can't afford to do without one, Lee."

I turned to the soup with pleasure. O'Flarity Child went on.

"A man can't get the most out of himself without one, Lee. And if I don't get one I simply won't be able to handle the work. My notes have to be typed and filed; my correspondence has to be answered deftly; my lectures

have to be taken down during the lecture and typed up for me so that I can see whether they're worth printing."

"Your secretary is going to be a busy woman," I said.

"He should have one secretary, one typist, one door man, and two or three assistants in research!" said Rhoda.

"No, I'll make my own searches. I don't need any help there."

That was true. O'Flarity Child, whatever his weaknesses, was remarkable in research—so remarkable, in fact, that he never looked up his problem. He would write down his solution, whether historical or otherwise, and look up his footnotes merely to make sure of his correctness. With a few possible exceptions, he never forgot a fact he had read in a book, nor remembered anything he acquired elsewhere.

"Do you think it would be an affectation, Lee, if I took on a secretary? In other departments they have assistants; I couldn't use an assistant, but a secretary would make a big difference to me. It would certainly increase my production."

"I don't think it would be an affectation, Flarey, but I think it would be a mistake to increase your production."

"You've never needed one?"

"Never."

"But then you haven't plunged into the world the way I'm going to. You've limited your career. Don't you admit that, Lee?"

"I've never given the matter of a career a thought." I noticed that Rhoda had said nothing for some time; her brow seemed to me clouded and growing more and more threatening; I dreaded another domestic scene. I was wondering if Rhoda's spirits had not gone down because neither of us had expressed much interest in what she had been doing.

"Rhoda," I said, "when you are conducting a book sec-

tion, you'll be the only one of the three of us to have a real job."

"Is this something new, Rhoda?" Flarey asked.

"No, it's only a wild idea of mine."

"Oh!"

"I think it's a very good idea," I said.

"It's the first I've heard of it," said Flarey.

Whether it was or not I never knew, but I always doubted it. Rhoda lately acquired the habit of typing little bulletins about herself and leaving them upon his desk. Then he would remember. And I soon acquired the habit of never trying to say the tactful thing when a husband and wife needed the tact to arise at home rather than abroad. O'Flarity's remark made Rhoda all the more uncomfortable. We pursued the question of secretaries again to my displeasure, because I did not want to speak my mind freely on the subject before Rhoda. I could see that I was going to break flatly with my former pride and joy on the subject of trying to mingle a university career and a public one; and I knew that he was beginning to hold against me the fact that I had not somehow got into the world as a public character. These things I preferred not to discuss with him in Rhoda's presence, for my frankness occasionally hurt people's feelings. To cut short I began looking about the room.

"That solitary diner there in the corner is my notion of a fine looking fellow," I said.

"Isn't he!" said O'Flarity.

"You know him?" asked Rhoda.

"No."

"We do."

"We?" said O'Flarity.

"Don't you know, Flarey? Think!"

"He's vaguely familiar, but I don't remember seeing him lately."

"His name is Gilman. We met him on the steamer."

"So we did. I remember. Now what's he doing in America again?"

"I never knew what he was doing here the first time. You remember my telling you of him, don't you, Lee?"

"Yes, I do, but I've never been able to associate your story of him with an impression of a real person. I'm awfully glad to see him."

Not a great deal of him could be observed. He was dividing his attention between his dessert and a sporting sheet that obstructed my view. Presently the waiter gave him his change and he gathered up his paper. There were two doors by which he could have left the grill room, and he deliberately chose the one that brought him near our table. Evidently he had seen us first. As he approached, both Rhoda and O'Flarity looked up expectantly.

"Well, if it isn't Mrs. Child," he said, bowing. O'Flarity and I got up; they shook hands and I was introduced.

"Sit down and have dessert with us," O'Flarity urged cordially.

"I couldn't have dessert, but I should love to sit down."

"Have another cup of coffee anyway," said Rhoda.

"It's perfectly ripping to meet you after all these years, and neither of you changed a bit."

"Not really," said Rhoda, mocking his accent playfully.

"To be perfectly candid, while I recognized you at once, I have not a precise enough memory to tell you exactly how you have changed. For one thing you're wearing a different gown, but Mr. Child, from all you can judge by sight, has exactly the same togs."

Gilman was correct in his observation. O'Flarity sometimes got new, but he never changed his style.

"You look about the same yourself," said O'Flarity.

"I'm afraid I'm past the age when one changes without an apology. But tell me, Mrs. Child, how have you got on

in journalism? Don't you remember, the one thing you told me about was your big scheme? Have your plans materialized? I'm so interested."

Rhoda's face beamed with pleasure. "It's a long story," she said, "and it's not altogether a happy one, but I'll tell you about it some time."

"I wish you would," he said simply.

"Are you staying long in Boston?" asked O'Flarity.

"Only a month or so, I'm sorry to say."

"Well, please come and see us," urged Rhoda.

"I should be delighted."

The conversation turned to other things, and we finished our dinner and parted with Gilman in the lobby.

"Have you ever been in Belmont?"

"Yes, indeed. I'm terribly fond of it."

"Well, then, we'll expect you a week from Friday."

As we got into the machine O'Flarity said:

"Perhaps that will stimulate our heroic effort to find a cook."

"Our effort, darling, did you say?"

CHAPTER X

Rhoda was genial enough to invite me to dine with Mr. Gilman, but it fell out that I met him again before that occasion, in fact, the morning after I had been presented to him at the Copley-Plaza. He attended one of my Arlington lectures, how and why I never knew, as it is altogether without precedent for a stranger to venture in upon one of my lectures without invitation. The day being very fine there were I think only five or six others, and at the close I observed Gilman coming toward me, apparently to explain away his eccentric intrusion. I lingered enough for him to catch me.

"It was awfully jolly to listen in on this, Mr. Seebohm," he said. "Ever since I read your book on psycho-physics I've had a sneaking ambition to hear you lecture."

"I'm glad you liked it," I said. "Are you walking toward Massachusetts Avenue?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then we can go together." There was much in the man I could not account for and he aroused my curiosity.

"How did you happen to pick up my paper?" I asked.

"Mrs. Child told me about it five years ago."

"You're an Oxonian?"

"No, Cambridge."

"Then perhaps you knew my friend Bottomley who lectured in Anglo-Saxon Philology."

"After my time, I believe." His brows knitted together and he smiled attractively. Gilman's age was not easy for me to guess. I had thought him younger than I, who was forty-four at the time, but if he preceded Bottomley at Cambridge he must surely have been the elder. I won-

dered if it were not possible for an English boy to go through Cambridge without knowing of my friend's existence, as many, no doubt, go through Arlington without ever hearing of me.

"But I thought Bottomley was pretty well known."

"Not in the late eighties," said Gilman.

"No," I said, astonished. "Not in the eighties!" We had reached the point where each went his own way; I was wondering as we shook hands whether I should invite him to try some more of my lectures, but we parted before I reached a satisfactory conclusion.

Gilman was well built and amazingly youthful for his age, that could not have been a day under fifty. There was an athletic gesture in the way he handled his body; but there was no swagger about it; the ease of his carriage struck you. We Americans have a characteristic of being athletic about this or that particular sport, and when not engaged in its pursuit our bodies lose all expression of the physical pleasure of well-being. Englishmen, however, seem to me to carry their sportsmanship, if they have any, into all the little nooks and crannies of their lives. Gilman was pleasantly graceful in a way that suggested refinement both of body and mind.

His smile, the frequent knitting of his brows, and the play of little wrinkles about his grayish eyes, were sympathetic without intrusion, friendly and intimate without familiarity.

As I drove myself out to Belmont I reflected that I had rarely met a man who attracted me more. What instantly drew me to him was the simple faith that a fine quality of friendship, not at once definable, was possible between us. If we had met years ago, I thought, it might have made some difference in our lives. But by the time I reached home I was asking myself whether, after all, it was too late.

And yet for some reason or other I could not suppress a wave of feeling against him. Rhoda's story of their meeting returned to my mind with the vividness of everything associated with that woman. So it was she who had told him about my obscure labours! I had not known that I had figured in their conversations. My hostility was probably due to a mild jealousy of an affair of old standing, and I thought myself ridiculous and resolved to make a friend of the man. But the moment I reached this conclusion other objections came to my mind. Why rush forward? Wait, at any rate, until after Rhoda's dinner.

It was a calm and warm day. An hour or so later I moved my chair so that it was hard to tell whether I was more in the house than out of it, but my eyes were chiefly without, as I marked the green everywhere springing up. Suddenly I perceived Rhoda, walking up the road from the station. She was smartly gowned in a light suit; short skirts were in fashion and she looked well set off in them. I wondered whether she was coming in to see us or passing on the way to her own home, and I jumped up with pleasure when she turned in by my gate.

"Is Went in?" she asked when she spied me.

"No, his recess was over last night and he's back at Cambridge. Please stay a while and don't be too disappointed."

"The bad boy!" she said, sitting down with much desired relaxation.

"I didn't know that anything was wrong with him, Rhoda," I remarked, making a brave showing of parental satisfaction.

"He came over to lunch with me to-day; I had no idea that his recess was over."

"What's the difference?"

"He was so excited about my job on the *Tribune* that I stopped to tell him that it was all settled this afternoon."

"Oh, Rhoda, that's perfectly splendid!"

"Isn't it? After all these years when I thought that everything was lost! Lee, you have no idea what it means to me. There's something almost religious about it!"

"Rhoda," I said with some hesitancy, "I don't regard it as a position that requires the best of your abilities as I've seen them, but I'm terribly pleased about it."

"It means," she went on, really paying no attention to me, "it means that I've solved the hardest problem. It doesn't matter if my career never amounts to anything. I have a regular job, and . . . well, our new home . . . and everything . . . will somehow work out. There now, I've been talking too much!"

"Nonsense," I said, "you've a right to!"

"I'm in a great hurry to run and tell O. F. Should you like to walk over with me?"

"Nothing would suit me better." I got up to look for my hat and stick. When I came back Rhoda was as though she had not moved, her eyes fixed upon the blue sky, her cheeks both pale and excitedly red in patches. "Come on, you've to go and tell Flarey."

"He'll be so pleased," she said, jumping to her feet.

"And proud, too," I added as we hurried down the road.

"Speaking of Went, Rhoda, don't you think that he looks as though he were getting ready for a flier?"

"There's nothing sudden about it, Lee."

"Oh, you noticed it, did you?"

"Well, rather."

"I should prefer keeping my hands out of it, Rhoda, but if you ever feel that the responsibility of acting as nurse girl for my boy is too great to assume I can pack him off for you."

"Don't worry about it. Leave it to me. Trust me and I'll give you back your boy no worse."

"Why, I've always trusted you, old girl. I mentioned it for your sake, not mine or even his." We said nothing for a while and then I added: "The moment he found himself worked up he naturally shunned his father and became studiously secretive about all the little things in life."

"He'll get over it, Daddy Seebohm! Don't you worry."

"My dear lady, nothing could be further from my mind. The only reason I spoke was that I foolishly thought you didn't know what was up. As a matter of fact, since such things must be, I'm damned glad you're the lady!"

"Thank you for your trust, Lee."

"Good-bye and good luck with your new job."

Leaving Rhoda outside of her highly ornamental, Colonial house, I walked home feeling a bit younger myself by way of thinking about Wentworth. I had a picture of him at Cambridge, probably not studying vigorously but turning page after page without being able to find one that was not a futile blank compared to the vivid, entrancing, promising, and significant picture of Rhoda Lispenyard-Child that his imagination kept thrusting before him and refused to withdraw.

Rhoda, on the contrary, reflected upon nothing, but, seeking out O. F. in his office, threw herself into his arms, and burst into tears. She did not know precisely why except that she had wanted to all afternoon but could not find a suitable place. And through her tears came an incoherent account of her good fortune.

O'Flarity released himself and helped her to sit down in a great leather chair, upon the arm of which he himself perched at a safe distance. He did take out his handkerchief with the feeling that it was very considerate of him to remember such things. And it was hard for him to be considerate in such circumstances. He could understand tears when women had something to cry about, but

these unexplained outbursts required a great deal of tact. Tears were rather primitive anyway, or at least juvenile if not quite primitive, and he certainly could not remember having had recourse to them himself.

Perhaps Rhoda realized the strain under which she had placed her husband, and, accepting the handkerchief, she tried to make short work of drying her eyes.

"I'm sorry, Flarey. I know you don't like me to cry, but I just couldn't help it."

"Never mind, dear, you'll be all right in a few moments. I knew you'd get the job if there was any possibility of it, and I certainly hope you enjoy it as much as you think you will. But you haven't heard the news from my front yet. I've got my secretary, and I expect to get my whack at the Lowell Institute Lectures the year after next."

But Rhoda could not grasp these facts. She was conscious that she was missing something, but she could not take it in.

"What were you saying, darling?" she asked. He repeated his whole speech while his wife poked her foot in the trash basket and watched the act as though she were still thinking of something else.

"I've made a deal with the dean," he said in conclusion. "I'm to have leave to go off lecturing whenever an opportunity comes up. I can have an assistant take my lectures." Suddenly he noticed that there were still tears in Rhoda's eyes. "Why, what's the matter, Rhoda?"

"Oh, nothing," she said.

He got up nervously, and then came back and sat down on the other arm of her chair. "Rhoda, it isn't like you to cry. What's the matter? Tell me about it, Rhoda, darling. Look at me, please."

"It's so hard to tell you, Flarey. You ought to have known of yourself. I came home so excited and pleased. I've been trying to work my way into something like this

for years. It means almost everything to me, and you simply threw a damper on the whole business. You wouldn't listen to me, didn't care what I was saying. . . ."

"That's not fair, sweetheart, I did pay attention to what you were saying. Frankly, I was somewhat startled by it."

"You didn't seem startled. You seemed perfectly oblivious."

"Well, you see, I put it aside to consider later at my leisure. Come now, kiss and make up. Our trouble is we've forgotten how to relax. We have to see what this new cook is going to do for us. You go and bathe your eyes."

At supper they found very little to do but whisper noisily and impolitely upon the relative merits of the cook and waitress, while the latter was sufficiently distant not to overhear. Rhoda's intense happiness had left her completely and she veiled her fallen spirits by seeming to take a great interest in the way the household conducted itself.

"I wish," said O. F., "that Rachel (the waitress) would not remove the bread and butter until after the salad course."

"Tell her," said Rhoda, "I'm sure she'll pay more attention to you than to me."

"Is it quite fashionable," asked O. F. presently, "for waitresses to wear such very short skirts?"

"I don't know, Flarey. I used to be an authority on women's fashions before I met you. I used to edit a column on the subject, but now my only interest is in literary fashions."

"I wonder if Professor McKenzie could teach that girl to wait without getting out of breath. They say his whole theory of hygiene is based upon correct breathing."

"You just don't understand women, Flarey, she's out of breath because you terrify her. You look at her as though she was an examination paper."

"The cook's not bad to my reckoning. These apple fritters are fairly amusing."

They dined on the porch for the first time that year, but it turned suddenly colder and they were glad, after dinner, to go into the room that Rhoda had designed with so much care. Rhoda lit a cigarette, picked up the morning edition of the *Tribune,* and lay down upon the divan. O. F. smoked his pipe; he was plainly ill at ease; the scene before supper was still troubling his spirit, and in the absence of the maid it was obvious that Rhoda could not long preserve the peace.

"I say, Rhoda," said he, knocking out his pipe and filling it up again as though he had started wrong the first time. "I say, Rhoda, I'm awfully sorry for what happened before supper. It was damned egotistical of me. I don't know why I should be so wrapped up in my own affairs. It's terribly bad for a man to be so damned egotistical. I guess it's the war. I was away so long, and then my books came out. You know, that was in some ways fortunate for me hereabouts. If a man comes down the street and into the university with a bundle of books under his arm and distributes them to all his students, their appreciation of the book is limited by their highest appreciation of the man. But to have your books come out when you're not about the town and before anyone had heard you talk made a big difference. But I say, I shouldn't be so self-centred about things, and I'm terribly sorry. It's just so bully for you to get the job that I don't know what to say."

He spoke warmly, enthusiastically. Even when he seemed incapable of grasping the situation really personally and fell to talking about O'Flarity Child, he was attractive in spite of himself. He went and sat down at her feet and took the paper away from her. Rhoda looked into his eyes. She never doubted that she loved him; and

she never lost faith in his greatness. It moved him to have her look searchingly into his eyes because her face seemed to reflect what she believed to be within him, and he buried his face in her idle hands.

"Flarey, darling," she said, softly, stroking his silken hair with one hand, "I think the only real desire that I've had since we married has been to help you, and you mustn't blame me for coming home with banners out and making a big fuss about my story."

"I don't, sweetheart," he said. "It was just nasty of me not to feel instantly proud and happy."

"And don't ever imagine that fundamentally I think my personality of more importance than yours; I don't. I think of you as a really great man; I think of your future as the great future. But I should never go on with you unless it were on the assumption of equality between us—not a real equality, but not the case of the strong man with a weak and silly wife. That would be so degrading, wouldn't it, dear?"

"Yes." He was not fully convinced. He had known Rhoda to talk this way occasionally in the course of the few years that they had been together, but it had never seemed pressingly significant before. Hitherto his career had always dictated to some extent the limitations of her plans, but he had taken it for granted and had not realized what it meant. What hurt Rhoda's feelings was not so much what she had relinquished on his account, but the way in which he disregarded her sacrifice. Did he think that she had been glad of an excuse to go abroad for two years, to go west for three, and to remain like Achilles sulking in his tent for almost two years? The last was not his fault directly, though it was his fault that she was not so far along in her profession when the war broke that to leave it would have seemed out of the question. At any rate he

had sometimes wondered why his wife was unhappy; it did not seem quite right for her to have so many reservations.

"Well, anyway, if this job is what you want, why it's a good thing that you have it, and I'm enthusiastic about it. So there!" He kissed her and went across the room to relight his pipe. "I say," he went on, "you did an awfully good job on this house. I was a bit shocked at the big room with the two offices on each side, but I'm beginning to think it's a pretty good scheme, though I hate the thought of our being so far apart when we're both in the house."

"Well, when you're working you're a long way off anyway."

"I know, but I used to like having you about in the same room, somehow or other."

"But it exasperates me. I don't like being in the same room with you unless you feel like giving me your first attention." It sounded stupid as she said it, but there was no help for it. One has to say stupid things frankly now and then if one is to express oneself. If he got her meaning it did not really matter how it sounded. Of course she did not dislike his leisurely reading or doing little things when she was with him. What she objected to precisely, though she could not find the words for it or the courage to utter them, whichever it was, was his feeling that she needs must be ever present like a piece of furniture, what though he made no pretense of relaxing a particle from his labours.

Flarey went to the fireplace and knocked out his pipe again. It was something that he did out of sheer nervousness, and Rhoda noticed it with the concern one might feel in observing a rapidly falling barometer.

"Let me have one of your cigarettes, please," he said.

"What's wrong with the pipe?" asked Rhoda as she threw her box across the room.

"Oh, I don't know . . . Nothing, I suppose."

"Well, then, what's wrong with you?"

"Nothing very serious. I'd like to think it over first."

"Oh!"

"I wish the little things I do didn't get on your nerves so."

"They don't, only I wish you didn't think some things little that mean a great deal to me."

"Rhoda, it's sometimes . . ."

"Now, for instance, I think we'd be better off if you could tell me spontaneously what's on your mind—that is, of course, if I'm concerned. We might both do the thinking."

"But I'm not a spontaneous nature."

"And I'm evidently not. . . ."

"All right," said Flarey, "I'll tell you. I didn't want to at first because I hadn't formulated my notions yet. It's about household matters, domestic matters, entertaining and the like. I'm all at sea. We never had a real home before, and I don't know anything about the administration of such matters. You see, if you're going to be over in Boston every day, and we're both in our respective sanctuaries in the evening, I don't see how the house is going to run smoothly."

"Oh, confound it! That's what I say!"

"No, I mean it seriously, Rhoda. You and I constitute a family, and together as a family we shall have a social career of some sort."

"You can have that by yourself, Flarey."

"No, I can't. I'm a married man, and a married man can't figure socially alone. Not in this climate, anyway."

"So much the worse for the climate."

"But you don't understand, Rhoda, and I don't really know enough about it to express what I mean. You see, I take a great pride in this marriage of ours, and the house is a sort of representation of it in a way. I want it to be

the centre of things in Belmont; I want it to be a retreat from Arlington for the students we like, as well as for the instructors."

"If it's going to be that you shall have to make it so yourself."

"But I can't. I don't know how. I can't apply my mind to that sort of thing."

"It's too bad, because my social life will be very different from yours. I shall have my own friends whom I meet in another sphere of life."

"It's nothing extraordinary that I'm grasping for, Rhoda. But I've lived so long without any regular sort of home, you know, that I've practically been converted to domestic life. And I'm a bit glad of it, you know, but at the same time I don't see how we are going to work it out."

"Flarey, I'm never going to work it all out for you. You won't really like it if you don't do your share. It will never mean as much to you as it will if you do your work in building up our little home. You're right that the house in itself is nothing; it's what we make of the house that counts, and you've got to do your part of it."

"Well, there you have the spontaneous expression of what I'm worried about, anyway. This house, without adequate management—because I'm no good at it and you're going to be too busy. . . ."

"I should say," said Rhoda, holding her throat and walking toward the door of her workroom, "that you had better cultivate a little common sense." She closed the door after her and hoped that O'Flarity would not notice it, which he did not, and flung herself upon the couch, trying to keep her sobbing from becoming audible.

It was the first time that she had left him after a disagreement without clearing away all the clouds. This time they had had their disagreement and come together again, and the next quarrel arose so quickly that she was

appalled by it. If she had stayed and they had fought the thing out, she had no doubt that Flarey would have capitulated, and they would have come together again with the joy of demonstrative affection.

Was it possible that all these long discussions never resulted in a single conviction for either side, that both of them became overpowered by emotion, and their minds continued each on its separate course? The question startled her and she sat up. That was surely what happened this evening. They had clashed and in the heat of their feeling they had come together again; then, as they talked on, each seemed to recede to his former hostile position.

Once accepted, this interpretation of her married life was not altogether disheartening. It explained away a great deal of unhappiness and it explained also why their joy was of such brief duration. That they loved each other profoundly she still believed; it was in mind and character that they were drifting apart. A candid realization of the situation was perhaps all that was necessary, though such a realization was in itself suggestive of future difficulty.

Then and there she gave up the all-or-nothing theory of marriage. She would go on on a natural basis. Certainly it was worth trying; it put her on her mettle. It meant that there was nothing static in their marriage; that it was something to fight for, to preserve.

She would try, and it was never in her nature to try anything that she was not optimistic about. She got up and sat down at her desk; glancing at her calendar she saw "Friday: Gilman and Lee for dinner". With the pad in her hand she tiptoed to Flarey's study and knocked gently at the door.

"Come in," he said. Rhoda opened the door ever so little and regarded him with ironic caution. "Why should you knock, Rhoda? I thought it was the new maid."

"Just because I'm coming in the capacity of social secretary."

"Social secretary? What's that?"

"What you were crying about after dinner."

"Oh, I'd forgotten."

"We have guests for dinner, Friday, Mr. Child. Messrs. Gilman and Seebohm."

"Oh, yes. I recall that now."

"What women shall I ask?"

"Oh, dear me! Why should you ask me? How should I know?"

"Whom should I ask? What do you expect me to do? Ask women you dislike?"

"I don't know any women. Ask anybody."

"Dear, dear."

"Rhoda, I don't understand why you make such a fuss over this thing."

"Oh, Flarey, you're so incredibly stupid. Just an hour ago you were complaining bitterly about our social life. Now I ask you to help me set the table as any housewifely woman would do, and you're getting indignant about it!"

"I don't know any single women."

"Well, you should know some women if you want to set yourself up as the Czar of your new society. You can't expect me to do everything for you. It ought to be fairly obvious to you that I can't make you do what you will have to do yourself."

"I'm impractical. You should make some allowances for that."

"Listen, darling," Rhoda was losing patience again. "I didn't come in for one of these general discussions, but I can no more make allowances for your being impractical than you can make allowances for my being busy. You're not impractical; I once thought you were but I'm sure now

that you're not. What you are is helpless; you're a big baby, and I want you to know that you can't succeed socially, no matter how low you aim, unless you make the effort."

"All right, Rhoda. I'll try to manage a little better in things like that. Meanwhile please balance off the gentlemen as best you can."

"Of course I will." He sat down at his desk and began fumbling the papers, and Rhoda stroked his head. "I believe that you love me, Flarey."

"Why, of course I do, sweetheart," he said, kissing her free hand.

"I want you to know many women, O. F., in order that you can come to understand one a little better."

CHAPTER XI

Meanwhile I was taking Rhoda's dinner party as something inexplicably humorous. While not knowing as much as I do now of the hubbub that preceded it in her own domestic circle, there were intimations that more was intended than a neighbourly dropping in for supper. In the first place, my wine cellar was tapped for the occasion, Rhoda having been unable to transport her stock from Chester, where she had laid in against the new laws. The fact that wine was to be served did not signify anything in itself, but that Rhoda took the time to come over to my cellar was a confession. It rather pleased me, however, to see an effort being made toward bringing social interest into life again. I had come to Belmont to be quite free of that sort of thing, but unbending consistency in such matters is the forerunner of senility, and I was glad that there would be an opportunity to break my own rules. I had become a bit tired of myself anyway, and I wanted to let others distract me.

With these thoughts in mind I departed from the professional tardiness of wearing afternoon dress in the evening, and quite overwhelmed Jenkins by a sharp order to have my dinner suit laid out. It hurt his pride, apparently, that I had not told him some days before, for the clothes of my former festivities had been two years in camphor, the odour of which he thought might prove upsetting. This savour, however, was not volatile after a hasty pressing and an hour in the sun; and, setting myself in order, I took my hat and stick and started to walk down the road to the Childs'.

But before I had gone many steps it occurred to me that

I should come prepared to take somebody home, so I returned to the house, filled a cigarette case, and went to the garage and took the runabout, the closed car being out of repair.

Such precautions, however, were far from necessary, for Rhoda shouted with derision on learning of them. But although it shocked her sense of modernity, it nevertheless pleased her that I had the courage and the formality to suggest that I could take home anybody she indicated.

But I am getting ahead of my story. The dinner itself was a bore. Whether the dean and his wife constituted Flarey's idea of single ladies, I have no notion; but they were there. Probably he snatched them up in nervous excitement to prove to Rhoda that he could produce guests upon demand, and it is only fair to say that he may possibly have thought that having them this once would make it unnecessary to entertain them again for some time.

At any rate, that was all this dinner party amounted to, a bald statement of solvency in a social sense. Rhoda's conception of single women was the stark truth; she produced the Misses Tillmore and Goodshoe, old acquaintances of her spinsterhood, and I forgot to ask whether she thought I should like them any better for not having seen them for seven years. Once you forgave their habit of tittering and not quite meaningful laughter, you found them fairly interesting and pleasantly disposed women.

The presence of the dean and his wife, however, was what threw me into bad humour immediately. There are instances when my dislike of a person gives me pleasure, but in the case of the dean I never had even that satisfaction. I am still ashamed of the pettiness of my feeling toward him, but I can no more control it than I can prevent the gray in my hair encroaching upon the last suggestion of colour. I am told I could have it dyed, and that I could convince myself that the dean is the glorious soul that he

is reputed to be, but it never occurred to me to try either.

Two of the things that irritate me about him are the facts that he rarely closes his lips, though he sometimes gets his lower jaw up as far as it will go; and that the straight-haired moustache which he has for the purpose of shielding his imperfect teeth from conspicuousness, does nothing of the kind. Dean Hotchkiss has small eyes and puffy cheeks; he is a short, stout man, pompous, and makes a blowing, almost gasping sound when he talks.

Years ago he was a rival candidate for my chair and never forgave me my success. I always think of him as he speaks in faculty meetings, giving his reports and explaining why students have been expelled. His conviction that a scandal or a breach-of-promise suit, when it reaches the newspapers, is sufficient to separate any student from the university, is one that I do not share.

There is, however, something irrational in my dislike of the man. When young Mr. Hastings of Harvard tells me that he has written a new history of philosophy and then confesses blushingly an hour or two later that he has gone no further than ancient Greek philosophy because he thinks that it is a waste of time to read anyone later than Aristotle, I am highly amused and like the man for it. But when Hotchkiss tells me that he takes no interest in philosophy later than Mr. Arthur James Balfour's *Defense of Philosophical Doubt* (1879) and the same author's *Foundations of Belief* (1895), it makes the gooseflesh stand out all over me.

Mrs. Hotchkiss is distinguished in these unshackled times by giving the impression of being an extremely well-corseted woman. She has one of those silken, bustling, black and beaded figures, and belongs to the type of woman who never receives any attention unless her husband is taking honours or decorations. On such an occasion the

husband says in a few well-chosen words: "These honours, ladies and gentlemen, embarrass me more than I can well express. If I ever have done anything to merit them, I am sure that the credit really belongs to Mrs. Hotchkiss." Dean Hotchkiss waives all argument as to whether he is a great figure in the history of education; what he insists upon is that if he has ever amounted to anything it is through the devotion and inspiration of Mrs. Hotchkiss."

To extend my prejudice to this excellent woman is doubly shameful, but I am as helpless as in the case of her husband.

The students call her "old flannel petticoats."

Thanks to Rhoda I found myself between her two spinsters. Miss Goodshoe is a journalist or a dispenser of publicity—I don't remember which—and Miss Tillmore is an actress, lately of some popularity, I hear. But that night I could not remember these facts and I kept turning desperately from one to the other, trying to avoid Mrs. Hotchkiss, who sat directly opposite me. Before we had finished the soup I felt that I was beaten in my intention to avoid being drawn into a general conversation. I feared that my antipathy for the dean would somehow become well recognized by everyone present and, just as I was about to give up, Miss Goodshoe, with one of those sudden half turns of the head, came to my rescue.

"You're very polite to pretend, Mr. Seebohm, but you really didn't recognize me a bit."

"Oh, yes, I did. I know I haven't your name yet, but it will come presently."

"Maybe you can recall my name—that's a mere trick."

"But, my dear lady, I used to see you often. . . . I used to see you in that little Beacon Hill apartment of Rhoda's."

"That's right."

"And you used to think me intolerable?"

"Oh, no. Once you said something very pretty. . . ."

"And you were surprised?"

"No," she said, leaning toward me and whispering. "I wanted to corner you and talk to you about it . . ."

"I don't believe it; you never did."

". . . and you held me off!"

"I don't believe it. It's impossible."

Her whispering had the effect of causing Mrs. Hotchkiss to lean a bit forward and divide her attention between trying to hear and trying to express facially her disdain for the outrage. Flarey thought our conversation insubstantial and tried once more to move the whole table toward some triumph of concerted talk. He had something of the same trouble that I had; he would look at the dean and find him open-mouthed, and then he would lose track of what he intended to say.

"It's wonderful to be settled down here at last," he said finally, looking at me to avoid seeing Hotchkiss.

"I should think it would be a great satisfaction," said Gilman from the other end of the table. All evening he had been talking to Rhoda exclusively and we were all surprised that he realized that there were others present.

"But I wouldn't have lost one day of our exile," said O. F. "We met so many people and saw so much that we should otherwise never have had the opportunity to see. Even that awful job in the West—I shouldn't have missed it for anything in the world. I can't bring myself to believe that a sabbatical year will ever mean more to me than an opportunity to work on a new book."

"I'm glad you don't figure on travelling," said Miss Goodshoe. "It would be so hard for me to imagine what Rhoda would do."

"Why attempt it?" said Rhoda quickly.

"Now that Rhoda has the *Tribune* book review," said O'Flarity, laughing, "we can make a deal whereby you write the reviews of my books and I do yours."

"It would be splendid for me because I never write reviews," I said.

"We've got to do something to get Seebohm to write reviews, Dean Hotchkiss. Don't you think so?" asked O'Flarity.

"By all means."

"But, Flarey, dear," said Rhoda, "you can't have Lee's new book if there ever is one, I'm going to whack hell out of it myself personally!" This remark did nothing to make Dean and Mrs. Hotchkiss feel at home.

"Don't you want to change your mind about bringing out this book, Mr. Seebohm?" asked Gilman, who had a fine way of announcing his irony by changing the pitch of his voice ever so little.

"No," I said. "I'd trust the editor further than the reviewers."

"Hear, hear!"

"Seriously, though, Lee, you should write reviews," said Flarey in the tone of a man who is defending himself by his attack on another.

"Why should any man write book reviews who doesn't care to?" asked Gilman. "The world doesn't suffer from a lack of faint-hearted criticism."

"Doesn't it, though?" said Rhoda.

"No, I mean it," said O'Flarity, quite unnecessarily, for we all believed him. "I think that men like Lee owe it to the community to use their critical judgment publicly, so that they can have an influence upon the younger man."

"But I have no consciousness of owing the public anything whatever," I said.

"But it's such a narrow view. I'm sorry that you're so far away from the public. There's no need of it."

"I quite agree," said Hotchkiss, "and I feel strongly that the Arlington staff should be more publicly recognized.

I think it's fine for the members of the faculty to reach the public through the dignified press."

"I disagree with you, sir," I said, "in your view that the faculty should play to the dignified galleries. I owe the students who come to me the best that I can give them, and the rest of my time I devote to science—not priggishly, of course, to the exclusion of my pleasure. I don't see that it's narrow of me—unless possibly in a literal sense—to prefer a private career to a public one."

Flarey, however, was sincerely lost.

"Then why do you write a book at all?"

"Out of sheer inconsistency, I suppose. It's only fair to say that I do it most infrequently—perhaps twice in fifty years, if I live. Or say that I do it for science, if you must be moral about it."

I turned to Miss Goodshoe, hoping, at the cost of rudeness, to break up the general conversation into a group of *tête-à-têtes,* but before I could catch my breath or formulate words I heard Gilman, to my surprise, taking up my defense. "I think Mr. Seebohm mistakes himself for the ancient and unfortunate shoemaker whom the gods adjured to stick to his last."

"What was it I said to you some years ago?" I asked Miss Goodshoe.

"What do you want to know for?"

"For one thing I want it for my book."

"Oh, no—not that."

"But you don't really believe that story, do you?"

"Which?"

"About you're wanting to have it out with me in private."

"Absolutely. You held me off."

"Well, what was it I said?"

"I'll never tell."

"I don't believe a word of the story."

"You probably didn't notice the whole thing. You were in love with somebody else at the time."

That silenced me. Feeling that I couldn't handle the dinner either close at hand or across the table, I was glad to contemplate the fact that it would not last forever and watched Gilman and Rhoda, who seemed to be getting on famously.

The coffee was followed by clearing the table, and I was surprised by the arrival of other guests.

"Don't look as though you never saw anything like it," said Rhoda, taking me aside. "Flarey started inviting people and he didn't know where to stop. The result is that the evening we planned with Gilman is going to be a sort of general reception to the faculty, the wives, the adult children, and even the students."

"No," I said. "That's the end of a perfect day!"

"True enough," said she. "I'm so frightened I just can't take it seriously."

I quickly found that she was telling the truth. They began to come if not in droves, so fast and thick that I thought it impossible to be presented to each one separately, and, seizing a stout cigar, I escaped through one of the French windows.

Before I quite realized what I was doing I found myself reading in my own library. It was still early, my book absorbed me, and I had just decided to finish the chapter before going back to Childs', when hurried footsteps on the porch disturbed me. I went to the door, a tower of indignation, only to find my son Wentworth.

"Oh," I said, "I thought you were in Cambridge!"

"I came home to change, father," he said in great excitement. "I'm going over to Rhoda's. Sorry I startled you, father, but I'm afraid someone stole the runabout. Shall we telephone the police?"

"Not yet," I said, laughing. "I think we can find it."

We went over together and it amused him hugely to hear of my retreat.

When we arrived both Rhoda and O'Flarity were busily engaged in showing people the house, and explaining as well as they could how it happened to be the way it was.

And the house did lend itself to curiosity. Why was the library divided in two in just that obvious way, and why the two little offices, one on each side? Did they always expect to dine in their living room? And what kind of housekeeping did they expect to do with such a small kitchen?

In the effort to answer these and many other questions the company disintegrated; everyone ran about examining things minutely.

Rhoda, who had broken loose from the crowd, suddenly came up behind me and seized my arm. "If another person tells me that that kitchen is too small, I shall fall on the floor and scream!"

"Let's look at the garden," I said. "Not enough attention has been paid to the exterior."

"Fine," said Rhoda, and we went out to the porch, which was empty.

"Why go further?" I murmured.

"I really shouldn't be running away from my guests; it's awfully rude."

"Never mind," I said. "It's quiet here. Won't you have a cigarette?"

"Just one," said Rhoda, "and then I'll go back." I struck a match; her face was all anxiety.

"Rhoda, don't take this party too hard. I'll concede that it's a failure. You shouldn't try this kind of thing. It's all right for women who are home all day to plan and fix and fret; but when you come home at night you need relaxation, and you should have the small and intimate

gathering, so that you can excuse yourself and take it easy."

"Lee, it isn't that that oppresses me to-night. I know I can't handle this kind of a party, and I wouldn't do it again for anything. This was mere obstinacy on my part. I ought to have told Flarey not to do it, but I thought he wanted to, so I let him prove it to himself that he was wrong.

"What bothers me to-night is that I have a feeling that all these people here despise me. Tell me it isn't true, or tell me that it is true and I'll go back and fight them. I do feel as though I ought to know the truth before I clench my fists."

"I should say, Rhoda, that it would be better to know it and keep it to yourself."

"Well, what is the truth of the matter, Lee? Tell me quickly. I've almost finished my cigarette."

"Well, I think the truth is something like this. A crowd hates the individual, and this crowd is just like any other."

"What I feel is that they resent my having built the house my own way, and, as they can't very well admit it, they curse at it. They resent my having a den like Flarey's. When they see his they say 'how lovely', and when they see mine it's 'how strange'."

"It's perfectly obvious that they resent your having a job."

"I knew it," she said, getting up and clenching her fists.

"Sit down, Rhoda. Use your sense of humour. It's the most natural thing in the world. You can't possibly hope to get on in a set of idle, vain, and useless women. You can't expect them to like you. They refuse; they're jealous of you. And the men feel that they have to take the part of their women."

"Oh, how I hate the whole business!"

The door of the porch opened and an unsteady hand paused before opening it the whole way.

"Hang it all! I say it's tedious." It was Gilman's voice, and I had a premonition that he had had a bit too much to drink. Instantly I felt that there was something wrong, but I could not hear what it was that he had pronounced tedious. He was not the kind of man I should expect to overstimulate himself. He had seemed to me too much of the world not to hold stoically what little liquor was to be found. Rhoda also was startled by his voice; I observed that she relaxed her hands at his exclamation. What was said in reply we could not hear, but Gilman began again.

"With men it's too easy in this country," and he came out upon the porch, shutting the door behind him. "Oh, I say, are you there! I didn't know that. I've been having a discussion and I'm afraid I've behaved myself most reprehensibly."

"I think I'd better go in, Lee," said Rhoda, "please excuse me, Mr. Gilman, but I have to go back to my guests." She hurried by us and was gone. I looked at Gilman in the light that flashed through the window as Rhoda withdrew. He had certainly overtaxed himself, and for some reason or other it delighted me.

"I say, it's a wonderful night, Seebohm, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is; it's been hard for me to stay indoors."

"Don't let me keep you from the ladies, Seebohm."

I laughed outright; Gilman muttered softly: "I think I am out of the running so far as women are concerned for the rest of the evening."

"Perhaps I should go and have a drink myself."

"By all means, old fellow, but before you go I wish that you would assist me in a matter of etiquette, American etiquette."

"I'm sure I'm worse off in that respect than you, Gilman."

"Oh, how absurd of you! You know that you could not make a false step. The Christian Professor of Brewer Morals can do no wrong."

"No? I never thought of that before. Well, what's your question?"

"What was I going to say? Oh, now I know. I say, would it be more obvious if I left my hat and stick and chucked it all, as I am, or do you think I should try and find them in my present condition?"

"I think I can evade your question with theological astuteness. Suppose I get your hat and stick, and present your compliments to Mrs. Child?"

"Oh, that would be ripping! I say, that's ever so decent of you."

"Not at all," I said, and went in through the window.

It was by no means as easy as I had thought, for I had the misfortune to collide with a good many people who thought that I owed them more than a bow, and I have no doubt I did. Flarey was at one end of the room standing up and holding forth to about fifteen or twenty eager listeners. Rhoda had her hands full trying to serve refreshments to about as many. Wentworth was helping her and I was a moment or two in catching his ear. "Tell Rhoda that Gilman and I are bolting, will you, Went? She'll understand."

By the time I had found our things and gone out upon the veranda again, I was dismayed to find that I had come none too soon.

On the lawn a young student and a young woman, probably also a student, had fled the crowd and were holding what seemed to be a most engaging and exclusive chat upon a stone bench. My friend Gilman was approaching the bench from the rear with uncertain steps. He would

come fairly close and then fall back, and from their glances over their shoulders the youngsters were quite dismayed. In the circumstances they did not know whether the dean was giving an ear to their tender utterances, or whether some rough character had lost his way and was about to do something plainly embarrassing, such as ask them for coffee money or something to eat or drink.

"Dash it all!" shouted Gilman, just as I reached the scene. "Can no one tell me where the devil to find the tramway? I've lost my sense of direction."

"Never mind the trolley, Gilman; let me take you home in the machine."

"Oh, did you get my things? Thanks awfully. This makes me feel quite myself again."

The runabout was hard by, and we were off before anyone realized it.

"How should you like to take the air," I asked, "before we go in? Are you warm enough?"

"Ripping, but if you're driving you won't talk, and I should rather sit and talk a while. You Americans always want to do something."

He was one of those men who think in terms of nationality when intoxicated.

"All right," I said, "we can stop at my house down the road here and talk as long as you please."

We were there in a moment. I turned up a lamp and found two chairs. Gilman sat down and stretched out his legs.

"I wish you could explain American life to me. It's so awfully difficult for me to get an idea of what is in the minds and hearts of the people in this country. I've never been to a social event that wasn't as awful as that one to-night!"

"Well, I am not in a position to criticize intelligently. I've no basis for comparison, Gilman. I hate travel, and

so I don't know the least thing about English society, for instance."

"Well, I don't know that English society is really any better. It has different manners, and it looks different, but when you get right down to it, Seebohm, the bohemians are the only people who have a decent life socially. They make themselves ridiculous, of course; but among themselves, I mean, they seem to be having a jolly good time, whereas we respectable people never seem to be quite able to play the formal and conventional game that we put before us. Either we get hurt, or we break the rules deliberately, or the rules break us, because we can't ride them like horsemen. If one is to be formal one should be a member of the French aristocracy before the revolution. Otherwise the only thing I can see is to be out-and-out bohemian."

"That's interesting," I said. "Why didn't you talk that way over at the Childs'?" He was not under the influence of alcohol to the extent that he himself feared when he asked me to help him get away. Nevertheless, his imagination was stimulated and many reservations normal to him were broken down; as is usual in intoxication, habit was as strong as ever, only the reserve vanished.

"I couldn't have; they would have all thought it was propaganda."

"Probably," I admitted.

"What was it that you said was tedious, just as you were coming out on the porch?"

"Oh, I remember," he said, going on as though I did not exist except as stimulus, "some professor of sociology. . . ."

"Billings was the only one there."

". . . Yes, Billings was asking me my opinion about American life, and I said that it's a land of interesting women and dull men. In any level of society the women have more character than the men. And a large part of the social difficulty is that the men feel it and react to it dis-

honestly. While they pretend an equality of sex as no other race pretends it, they treat women as inferiors in fact, which is of course the bane of any social set. Do you remember Meredith's *Essay on Comedy?* He makes the point that without an assumption of social equality between the sexes no really polite comedy can exist. The American likes to honour women with many words; he likes equality in law and politics and business. But in society he doesn't treat a woman as an equal; it would make him feel foolish; it would make him conscious of his inferiority."

"Well, is the position of English women any better?"

"I don't really know. I'm not talking absolutely, I'm thinking aloud. Take that Child family. Mrs. Child is in every way superior to Mr. Child as a person and as a character. She's much too interested in her career and her place, but that's because it's the only way she can command the respect she deserves, or she thinks it is. But she's rounded, luxurious, full of emotion, and not ashamed of her better nature. Now her husband is a very promising young university don, but he goes about being one just the way a business man goes about being a success in the world. All the professional men I've met in this country ply their professions with so much materialism that they ruin themselves socially. Those people there to-night, Seebohm, were all rather sneering at her and all sniveling patronizingly at him. I know them; I watched them."

So Gilman had noticed it, too.

"It's a country," he said at length, "of great women," a remark that did not then appeal to me strongly, whether just or not.

"Scotch or Rye?" I asked.

"Thank you, no," he said with a laugh. "If you'll show me the way to the tramway, I'll not trouble you to take me in."

"I should like to. I don't expect to get to sleep for some time." There were few cars on the road, and I took him in to his lodging on Pinkney Street so quickly that I was back within an hour. I slipped into a smoking jacket and sat down in my little room upstairs. Rhoda was none too happy, something or other was seriously troubling her mind. Clearly it was none of my business and yet my friendship for her seemed to be regaining its old power and I wanted to let her know how I felt.

Gilman seemed to me an element in the situation. I wondered whether Rhoda had fallen in love with him. Who was he? What was he? I had no idea, and the answers to such questions seemed to me irrelevant. My musings were interrupted by Wentworth, who knocked upon my door.

"Come in, son," I said. He looked tired and his cheeks were flushed. There was something downcast in his head and shoulders.

"Rhoda was very beautiful to-night," he said, dropping into a chair.

"She has always seemed so to me," I ventured.

"But to-night she was different. I don't know just how to explain it. Usually when Rhoda and I are together she seems so young and playful that I forget her age completely, but to-night she seemed so very old, a sort of majestic, middle age. Perhaps it was her gown; I'm used to her in knickers or sport clothes."

"I thought her gown in excellent taste," I said.

"It's funny, dad. I've seen so much of Rhoda lately, but I had no idea how beautiful she was in that dignified way. I used to think evening clothes a bore, but I don't see why Rhoda ever wears anything else."

"They'd hardly do over at the *Tribune* office."

"I wish she didn't go to the *Tribune,* father, really I do."

"Why?"

"Well, it's a bother and there's no real need for it. And then, other people don't like it. They all laugh at her for insisting upon doing a regular day's work."

"I'm not altogether sure of that, son. There are a good many people who admire her for the way she's taken hold since she got back."

"You may, dad, and Flarey may, but almost everybody thinks poorly of her for doing it."

"What makes you think that, son?"

"Oh, well, I notice the way people do. Flarey is regarded as a great man; he's going to be a world beater. Everybody has heard of him; people wait for his books and his lectures. The highbrow clubs all want him to come and talk. And when people get excited about a man and think he's a genius, it seems funny for his wife to be bothering about a little job."

"You surprise me very much, Went."

"Oh, no, father! I'm crazy about Rhoda. But I like her as a chum, as somebody for golf, and tennis, and riding! She's a wonderful motorist, too! She's a terribly good chum."

"Well, I wonder if she would be such a good chum if she weren't trying to be a good woman, too."

"I don't know, dad," said Wentworth, getting up and finding it difficult not to stretch and yawn. "A good many people try awfully hard to do the right thing and go dead wrong. Good-night. I think I'll sleep here and go back to Cambridge in the morning." He lit a cigarette and went to his room.

I have heard that mothers upon first seeing their babes are sometimes incredulous and refuse to believe that they actually produced such hopelessly embryonic beings. Many times, but never more acutely than that night, did I feel that it was hard to believe the facts of Wentworth's origin.

I had never dreamed that he could turn against Rhoda as a woman, yet that was what he had come pretty near doing.

He did it in the heat of his youthful love. Not that love is not always youthful and that it does not in its nature defy all wisdom, but that first love, unlike the others, seems to me doubly subjective. He had, from the moment that he had fallen in love with Rhoda, begun to think of her in terms of his own emotion, and the only powerful sensation he had experienced thus far was self-love. And youth, while it is far from conservative—for it lays waste and destroys with a light heart—is extraordinarily conventional. The further back one goes in anthropology, the more conventional primitive man appears, and in youth we are conventional without questioning. Wentworth, like Gilman, had been a keen observer at Rhoda's party. Gilman had noticed the general veneration of O. F. and the veiled contempt for Rhoda, and having had perhaps a very little more wine than was good for him, he knew that he could not disguise his sentiments and so made a bolt for the door. I must admit that after seeing my son that evening my opinion of Gilman rose; he had retired in good order, hopeless though his flight appeared. Wentworth, on the other hand, whatever his emotions and previous judgments had been, was overpowered by the majority opinion. He was not old enough to understand, and his sympathy was undone by the force of his primitive instinct to line up with the crowd.

The next day I said nothing, but I planned a complete change in the course of study I had mapped out for him that summer. It is perhaps a mistake to think, as Bacon did, that every ill of the soul has a cure in a course of study; but it could certainly not seriously retard any progress that he might naturally make.

With these thoughts still in my mind I was about to go for a stroll when I saw Rhoda coming up the path.

"Don't tell me what a rotten party it was!" she shouted.

"I had no such intention."

"I talked it over with Charles Gilman at lunch to-day and I don't want to hear any more about it."

"It's always a mistake to judge a party," I said. "It makes you feel as though you should never attempt another."

"I never shall," she said, resting one foot on the bottom of the step and looking up at me. "Were you going for a walk, Lee?"

"Should you like to join me?"

"No, I'm tired. Let's sit down on the steps for a moment."

"You had tea with Gilman?"

"No, lunch. I don't get time to have tea any more."

"That's too bad."

"Which?"

"Tea is a good habit."

"Gilman said you were a good sport last night."

"He means I listened to him."

"Did he say much?"

"Not a great deal. But he wanted to talk and I was very much interested. I felt naturally curious about him but I didn't think I had a right to ask him personal questions."

"I feel that way about him, too, Lee." The innocence of it amazed me.

"Do you mean to say you don't know anything about this man at all?"

"Almost nothing, Lee; he's one of those people who come and go without explanation and without leaving any traces except in the hearts and minds of a very few people. You know that he's practically an exile, don't you?"

"Why, no. I don't know anything about him at all."

"He's teaching English at Latin Grammar School, which is quite ridiculous because he's fitted to be a college professor in more than one subject. There was something wrong in England, and he had to cut loose. From bits of things he's said I know he went into the war but he had hard luck and couldn't get into anything but some silly mission over here, buying horses or something like that. He's a great horseman, and when he first came to this country, he made his living as a riding master and horse dealer."

"He seems to be a hard man to place," I said.

"Yes, all you can be sure of is that he's a conquest of mine."

"I had no doubts of that after last night."

"I gave him a few books to review. He came and asked for them, and I think he writes very well."

"I didn't know he did write."

"Oh, yes, he published a book on Mexican folk songs. He wrote down what he heard on a walking trip in Mexico —wrote it down music and all. It didn't have a large sale, but it was a fine piece of work."

"I shall be interested to see his reviews. I almost brought myself to the point of asking him to dinner."

"Why don't you?"

"I think I will."

"Do you want to stroll down toward my house?"

"Love to; let me take your bag."

"Thanks," she said, getting up and smoothing out her skirt. "I'm about all in."

"Working hard?"

"It isn't so hard. It's against pressure."

"I don't understand," I said.

"The confounded paper is so big, and there are so many superiors and inferiors who have to be considered. Most

of my best energy that ought to go into my work will have to be wasted in fighting against petty jealousy. But it isn't only jealousy, there are some people there who aren't fit to be on any paper. Ostensibly I'm in charge of the weekly book section, but when anything really important, or that they think really important, comes up, they reach over into my department and start raising hell. I gave *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* to a well-known bank president to review, and then they jumped all over my dead body and wouldn't publish it. Said it was too radical."

"Well, Rhoda, you'll meet with difficulties like that everywhere, in any walk of life. I'm often in trouble at the university."

"You! I never knew that."

"Certainly."

"Well, not because you're too radical."

"Perhaps not," I said with a smile, "though that criticism has been brought forward. No, there are always a number of people who think that my chair is not so well occupied as it would be if one of themselves had it. And they go to the most childish excursions of jealousy and slander. Once the dean thought he should take my chair and I his. I said let's try it, and the result was remarkable. For a whole year not a single student was disciplined, and in the dean's courses, English 47h and 121k, not a single student managed to get a passing grade."

"You're absurd!"

"When it comes to playing headmaster, I'll admit it. But they were awfully glad to get me back in my place. There is still litigation with regard to the boys and girls who flunked."

"I wish I had your calm, sweet way of doing things, Lee. I always get excited. It hurts me here, in the middle," she said, bringing her hands to her bosom. "I've

always had to fight, fight for my honour. It all seems so terribly serious."

"Well, the difference is that I don't really care and you do. The things that are important to me are of no serious concern to most men and women."

"You know, Lee, some time in that office or elsewhere, there'll be a question of principle, and . . ."

We were at her gate, and we saw O. F. coming up from the trolley. He was carelessly dressed, with a cap and sack suit, and he carried his books in one of the green felt bags so common in Boston and thereabouts. When he saw us he tossed his cap and hurried to catch up.

"Hello, Lee," he said, "are you coming or going?"

"Neither, I'm going for a walk."

"How are you feeling, Rhoda? Any better than this morning?"

"Worse," she said, "I'm tired all the way to my bones."

"That's too bad," said O. F. "I'm sorry. I asked Professor and Mrs. Amah of Johns Hopkins to dinner."

"Oh, my God!" shouted Rhoda, and I went for my stroll, leaving them to hurry into the house and prepare for what, to Rhoda, must have been an unpleasant ordeal.

CHAPTER XII

Young Wentworth had a birthday early in June and as he had manifested more interest in riding than most things that spring, I got him boots and saddle to celebrate the dawn of his twentieth year. I had expected an invitation to ride that beautiful Sunday, but my expectations were no more justified than are the similar expectations of most parents with regard to their children. Will a father never understand that when his son is trying to arrange a really happy day he leaves him out, except as a possible dining-room fixture. He had come in from Cambridge the night before, and let slip the remark, as he went early to his room with four or five books under his arm, that he would try not to disturb me when he rose early the next morning.

I'm afraid he did not succeed in this delicate attention, for the new boots were hard and stiff, but I managed to roll over and sleep an hour or two longer on my bad side, after which I rang for coffee and journals, and finally got down to breakfast. I was perhaps halfway through with this formality when two figures approached the door with such lightness and rapidity that I knew they must have been running in play. There was the muffled thud of a soft, damp body against the door; the latch snapped, and Rhoda burst in—boots, breeches, a brilliant sweater, more tangerine than orange, and her short hair all a-flying. She slammed the door and turned the latch just before the second figure reached it; and he, hearing the latch click, did not pound in vain as he was supposed to do, but ran softly to one of the French windows and entered.

Neither of them saw me. Wentworth looked as though he intended to catch Rhoda in his arms, and could see nothing else. She, feigning to look through the keyhole, had her back turned to both of us, but still seemed to signify by the lightness and joyfulness of her flight, that she hoped to be caught.

The boy paused with an expression of vast delight upon his face. He seemed at once to forget the fact that they had been running playfully. His eyes fairly beamed with light and his cheeks burned; his hands, trembling, reached out for their object concretely, that is, with the fingers anticipating their grasp. Rhoda, gurgling with suppressed laughter, pretended that she did not know that Wentworth had come through the other way. I was asking myself whether I should make them aware of my presence when Rhoda, feeling something ominous in Wentworth's unexpected silence, suddenly straightened herself and faced him.

"Don't, Went," she cried, fear taking possession of her instantly, "we're too old for that sort of thing now!"

Her expression as she looked into the boy's eyes startled me so that I dropped my coffee cup, which had been somewhere between its saucer and my lips, and created thereby not only a disagreeable sound but a shattering mess as well.

"Damn it!" I said. "I needn't have been so unpleasant about announcing myself."

"Why, father!" said Went. "Excuse us!"

"Lee! I didn't see you when I came in."

"No, you both seemed to be thinking of something else."

"Oh," said Rhoda, dropping into a chair, "it's true about my getting old. I get tired so easily."

I looked askance at Rhoda, and as I did so I thought I could feel Wentworth searching my face for a clue as to whether I understood the full significance of what I had

just seen, and when I turned to him I felt certain that he had reached his conclusion, which was, of course, that I understood nothing.

"If you chaps are going to talk about growing old," I said, "it won't take you very long to come to the point that I hold the long distance record, so I think I'll go and take a walk."

"May I join you?" asked Rhoda.

"Delighted," I said. "Coming with us, Went?"

"I think I'd better change, father, it's almost lunch," he said, viewing Rhoda with disdain. It was one thing to come in from riding that way but quite another to go out walking with an elderly gentleman in such a costume.

"You don't look either old or tired this morning, Rhoda," I said after we were clear of the house. "You know what makes a chap feel old? It's when he can't remember not being tired in the morning, as though sleep could no longer repair the damages."

Rhoda remained silent. There were too many people on the golf links and the sun was warm, even for June, so we struck a little road beneath the hill.

"Do you remember how, as a little girl, you used to object to my saying that I thought you good-looking?"

"Yes, indeed I do. How stupid it was of me! The whole course of our lives seems to be changed by just such very little things as that. Isn't that so, Lee?"

"I shouldn't wonder."

"As a child my father and mother used to make remarks about my appearance every time I came into the room. It seemed to them that that was the most important thing in my life, and to me it was something that I hated and could never understand. It was such a very small thing and yet. . . ." Rhoda paused, she did not want to talk; I wondered why she had elected to walk with me.

"I suppose little things do change you about," I said,

"but I can't imagine myself very different from what I am. Of course I might have enjoyed finance. There isn't much more known about money than the things philosophers study. It might have been more satisfying to speculate in money than in ideas."

"And then there was my uncle's fortune," Rhoda went on without paying any attention to me, "another mere accident, that saved me from being a spinster schoolma'am all my life. If there is anything in the dignity of human life, how does it happen that such mere trifles change the whole course of it?"

"I believe that they only seem to be trifles, Rhoda. If they really were they wouldn't change so very much."

She walked with her eyes on the ground. Suddenly she took my arm—something she rarely did informally—and I knew that she was glad to be with me, whether she felt like talking or not.

"I suppose I'm one of those little things in the life of your boy," she said at length.

We were passing some trees that offered tempting shade. "Let's sit down and talk it over, Rhoda."

She threw off her sweater and we both sat down.

"I can't tell you all about it; at least not now. I only mean that suppose I'm not a fit woman to have mothered him as you wanted me to . . ."

"Well, you've chosen a hard person to convince of that, Rhoda."

"Oh, you're so kind, Lee!"

"Nonsense, I'm rather hard. I know you've made mistakes, but after all I never expect to find perfection in nature."

"But, Lee, my mistakes may have been fatal!"

"Which ones?" I asked. "I used to think it was a mistake to have bobbed your hair, but I'm seduced by it this morning."

"Lee!"

"Yes, I know how serious you are, but until you're ready . . . Will you have a cigarette?"

"I'll be ready to tell you everything sooner than you think. Don't think that I don't know how unkind it is for me to cling to you this way when I cannot tell you what is on my heart." She took one of the cigarettes and, when I lit it, she put her elbows on her knees and sat with her chin resting on her clenched fists. Her hair seemed loveliness itself as it tossed in the breeze and I observed a new folding of the flesh in the outer corners of her eyes, which were still brilliant, more so than usual that morning for the suggestion of a tear that came and went.

"May I help you on with your sweater? You're overheated, you know."

"Thanks, Lee." When she was comfortable again, she went on: "I dread being alone. I was alone too much as a young woman. It made me grow up all awry. I have a horror of being alone. I don't mind standing alone and fighting. I've always done that. But lately I've had so much warmth and companionship."

"Why should you dread being alone?"

"I wonder myself, but I do. What will you do when Went grows up and leaves you? Don't you dread it, too?"

"I have never permitted myself to regard him as much more than a responsibility. And just as soon as I think he is able to stand on his own feet, I'll send him about his business. He's too young to associate with me."

"Oh, how can you! I should think you would adore him and never want him to part from you."

"As long as I can teach him, and as long as I think that he can't face the world alone . . . but already we fail as companions. His mind is too strong and his character too strong for him not to try to meet me on my own plane

in a year or two, and that would be bad for him. It would be abnormal; it would deform his natural, steady growth."

"But don't you dread being alone?"

"Oh, I shall miss him, but I'm used to being alone."

"I've got to go and get ready for dinner," said Rhoda, jumping to her feet as she looked at her watch. "It's twelve-thirty!"

I left her at her door and quickened my pace, walking four or five miles before lunch. Rhoda's words had upset me far more than she knew, for, not having many personal ties in life, I am prone to be much affected by the unhappiness of the few friends that I have, as if nature awarded a compensating punishment for one so full of solitude. I recalled the image of her face when she turned upon Wentworth earlier that morning. Rhoda had known that the boy was in love with her and she knew that what happened at the close of that boisterous chase might have happened at any time. I thought that the horror that stole over her face had nothing directly to do with what she perceived in Wentworth. It came from within.

She was unhappy about her relationship to Flarey, and had not fully realized how far they were drifting apart until that morning. Probably Wentworth's emotion had moved her more powerfully than she had believed possible. At once it flashed upon her that her husband's hold was weakening.

Flarey had undoubtedly undergone sharp changes in personality, and they were not only sharp but deep. Everyone has a few stock notions about human character and I had always supposed, in my naive way, that the underlying principles were fundamentally consistent. My acquaintance with him reduced me to one more point of skepticism. Of all the students who passed under my spectacles he had seemed to me the one most capable of straight thinking, and I have never seen fit to deny it. I

reasoned from this that he was apt to be unsuccessful in life at large, a profound and perhaps original thinker, not inclined toward making peace with the world, and certainly not establishing himself on a business basis.

In this I had been in error. Almost as soon as O. F. fell in love with Rhoda, he lost interest in his work. Then, when he came back to it, it was with a new driving power. No longer was it work for its own sake, it was work as a means to an end. What I have never been able to understand about him, was how as able a thinker as he could have such a confusion of thought in the matter of the relation of ends and means. With him, at any rate, philosophy certainly did not begin at home.

There was a streak of moral cowardice about him; he was afraid to examine the ground upon which he stood. He had taken up a studious life because he believed that his health would permit no other, but when the opportunity came and he found that he could do as he pleased, what altered itself was his attitude and his method. He did not have the courage to seek out a profession that suited him by nature. Fully convinced of his greatness and fascinated by a vision of a career of large affairs, he began to fight for a position and a reputation in philosophy, and he applied all the methods of the clubman, the politician, the business man's lawyer—all the methods, in short, of material life.

Only a very able lecturer of philosophy could have done this without calamity. I regarded it as proof of his streak of genius that very few outside the inner circle of his home saw through the deliberate mechanics of his plan, and that those nearest him lost sight of his real virtue on account of the offensiveness of his methods. He began tampering with the legend that hung over his name. That, too, was something to be used toward his new ends. Naturally, the creative side of his mind suffered

first, but I am not certain that he ever possessed the faculty for independent thinking of a non-critical type. His critical, historical, and interpretative ability developed with great rapidity, and his name did become widely known. His book on the "Feud with Psychology" justly secured renown. It was a fine study; it brought together all the diverse forces in contemporary thought. Nevertheless, even in the criticism of the various recent schools, the context or the footnotes would reveal the presence of some obscure article or book in which these relevant matters were first disclosed. The genius of O'Flarity Child still seems to lie in his ability to judge what his contemporaries are ready to read and the faculty of setting things down in a way in which his readers are eager to review them.

His personal life suffered next. He loved his wife, he was a model husband; but his career was the important thing. Everything else was purely secondary. When they had first met she was the stronger, and it was her strength that had gone into his life and changed it. Then he came to regard her as wholly extraneous in his career-worship, chiefly because, I think, at any rate, she did not regard his career as her own.

And his personal relationships toward other people were radically altered. He cultivated the most influential members of the faculty; he talked down to the students. He filled his mind with sensational reports of matters of general interest. Whether it was a scandal on the stock exchange, a famous divorce case, or the returning delegates from the Peace Conference, he would have an inside line, some confidential information, some sensational sidelight that illuminated the whole affair. His name became associated with those of leading young men in other professions, journalists, lawyers, publicists; and he would refer to Mr. Haskins Doyle, formerly of the State Department and one of the younger hangers-on at Versailles, as my "friend

Doyle", and William Edgemere, the novelist, as "Billy Edge". But if he did make a good deal of these names, it must be admitted that people who met him once remembered him, and that with personal beauty such as his, a man can always make a killing in society no matter how unsophisticated. Meeting these people once or twice at a luncheon table was enough for him to feel honestly that he was one of their exquisite little circle of men called early to greatness.

Rhoda did not take all this very calmly and could not see it as a mere phase. She, too, had wanted to take the world by storm. But if she had not succeeded in taking many fortresses, she had a few valid excuses. In the first place, Rhoda wanted to be a complete personality; she wanted to live the life of a person who respects certain things. In fact, her career often met disaster largely because she never thought of it except as a means to preserve her self-respect. She worked because she believed that a woman ought to work.

I thought her resting upon a firmer philosophic basis than her learned husband. She at least had a sense of values. First, she was a woman; then she was a worker. O'Flarity wouldn't have admitted that first you are a careerist, and second you are a man. Rhoda's philosophy softened her naturally bitter and aggressive temperament; it made her kindly and willing to sacrifice herself. Had she not, on two important occasions, given up her own career for his? She should never have remembered it if he had remembered to manifest the slightest real gratitude. But the turn that his character had taken since marriage robbed him of many of the more delicate human virtues that he had at one time possessed to a striking degree. Modesty, sensitiveness, delicacy of emotion, and largeness of mind, seemed to have cut loose. At any rate he could not hold them.

He seemed to cherish a secret hope that Rhoda would give up her journalistic position. He would talk encouragingly of free-lancing. He was unsatisfied with his home, but did not approach the matter directly. He would make little remarks painfully frequently, about the difficulties he suffered in minor matters of domestic comfort. There was always the mending, the imperfect shopping, the undisciplined help raising pandemonium in the pantry.

Yet he could do nothing to solve these problems himself. He made a great deal of what he called his inability to use his hands. I imagined the helplessness chiefly a matter of affectation, but as the years went on, what was once affected as a means of self-protection from certain duties became second nature to him. I always thought that when first asked to help with the dishes he broke a great many on purpose. But that is somewhat unfair because, when he first tried to run an automobile, he really wanted to learn, but succeeded only in raising great havoc with the young fruit trees a half mile from his garage, and he never tried it again.

It was certainly not because he was incapable of practicality that he remained helpless, for in the pursuit of his career he was intensely practical with results that ought to have tempted him to apply the same methods elsewhere. His sense of proportion seemed to adjust itself only to the perspective of his vision of professional mastery.

Our own relations became strained, and I became aware of my insecurity with him very shortly after his trip abroad. Chiefly for the sake of Rhoda, but partly because I thought that he might some day be ready to listen to criticism, I avoided a clash of opinion.

At first he had used me as the object of youthful worship. Then his attitude toward me was that of a young chap who had married into the family, for although Rhoda was but distantly related to me, I was the only member

of her family occupying a real place in her life. And by the time this had worn off, that is, after seven years of marriage, O. F., as the untamed lion cub of the university, began to feel he had very little in common with me after all, and that I was no longer a significant factor in his life, which was perfectly true. There was very little probability that O. F. would remain long at Arlington. Presently an offer would come to him from a university that he thought great enough to warrant his making the change. Then he would leave us.

Always clearly aware of what she was doing, Rhoda had perforce taken her bearings in Belmont society. Flarey accepted this as a matter of course. He had never felt capable of managing his social affairs. He had no sense of number and it seemed to him quite irrelevant whether he invited ten or twenty, or whether he asked eighteen men and two women or two men and eighteen women. Rhoda was therefore compelled to take up a role that ill suited her. She had always been an indulgent person socially; she had great difficulty in speaking to more than one or possibly two persons. O. F. made no differentiation in numbers, which was his most conspicuous limitation as a teacher as well as in friendship. He never spoke personally; he addressed the multitudes. He never asked not to be quoted; he wished full publicity on every detail.

The upshot of this social tendency was unpleasant rather than gratifying. Everything had to be done by Rhoda, whose best energies were centred in the *Tribune* office in Boston, and whose mind, when at leisure, became speedily absorbed in matters that seemed to her of more significance. Her own close friends, who were very few, indeed, seemed out of place in the kind of affair that went to the essence of O. F.'s needs. If one of the fraternity of great young men chanced to be in Boston overnight, Flarey would have a nose for seeking him out and getting

him and his wife, or any appendages he might happen to have with him, home to dinner. The conversation would usually take a course that gave Rhoda no pleasure. It would exult in the success of their smart, intellectual set; it would emphasize the ridiculous in young men of aspiration whom they had not yet felt compelled to treat as equals.

The result was that Rhoda began to dread her home. She would come over to my library very often on the way home from work, listen to an unbearable interpretation of a Bach fugue, have tea with me, and munch her toast and marmalade sullenly. "You play those things so much like yourself, Lee," she would say again and again. "One side of your nature always opposing the other, and yet you seem to be so complete and undivided, so sustained in your sour old soul."

She felt that her maids were uncomfortable, and, of course, they were, because the home had never established a complete unity of purpose and atmosphere. It lacked the administrative vision of a loving eye. Their library always seemed to be out of order, their pictures not thoughtfully hung. There was about the structure something of the air of the temporary; it had the restlessness and superficiality of a house that is rented furnished. It lacked repose; there was no relaxation to be had at the Childs'; there was much luxury, but no comfort.

That same Sunday in June, Rhoda came down to lunch in a bright smock of gray Chinese silk, embroidered with circular designs. She had a light blue worsted skirt, the then fashionable colour of French uniforms. Her exercise with Wentworth and her walk with me had stimulated her mind, though she seemed at the same moment physically tired by her exertion. But there was, in her smock and short skirt, the suggestion of youthfulness and vigour, and

her hands played in her short hair with lightness and charm.

"Did you have a good time?" asked Flarey as they went in to lunch.

"Glorious!" said Rhoda, sitting down. "I haven't been out enough lately. I notice that it tires me to ride hard."

"I envy you. The army got me used to exercising and living a healthy life, and now I never get time to do anything. No wonder I'm groggy."

"Are you, dear? I didn't notice that you were feeling worse."

"I'm tired, Rhoda. I should like awfully to take the whole summer off."

"Why don't you, Flarey? A university man has a right to his summer."

"I know, but I don't feel that I can afford to let things run down. It's like letting the fires go out on a big ship. It isn't the university work that bothers me; I have to keep myself in harness to step into a situation. Somebody might want me to talk, or I might have an article to write. Sorry, I'd like awfully to do it."

Rhoda took a spoonful of soup, and looked at her husband. He did look tired, a nerve kept twitching over his left eye and he would put his hand up to stop it now and then. Rhoda thought that his remark about taking the summer off was the expression of a need suddenly realized, and she had more sympathy for him than he had for himself.

"Glad it's commencement week!" he said.

"Flarey, why don't you take a saddle horse and spend the summer at Chester? You know we could make a summer home of it. We could always go there for holidays; we could have guests there. It would be such fun!"

"But I couldn't be away in the country, Rhoda. I

couldn't be so far away from a reference library; I have to be established. But we might go out for a week or two."

"This year I can't get away myself at all. I was thinking that you could set yourself up there; I'd come out week-ends."

"Belmont's not a bad place in summer, Rhoda. I think I'll stay here. As a matter of fact I never dreamed that we could have such a lovely house as this when we married. It couldn't be more comfortable."

After lunch Flarey went back to his work and Rhoda, taking a novel that she had to review for the next issue, went out on the porch and tried to read. She could not, however, concentrate her mind on any subject other than that of her husband and his summer vacation, and she was glad to meet him again at tea time. He was contentedly thoughtful and silent; evidently the idea of taking the summer off had not occurred to him again, and after a second cup of tea he lit his pipe and lay down.

"Flarey," said Rhoda with hesitation.

"What is it, my dear?"

"I've been thinking it over, and I think you really need a rest. Now I may be able to make some arrangement down at the office, I don't know just what, but . . ."

"I don't need to take the whole summer off, Rhoda."

Rhoda got up and then sat down impulsively upon the floor next to the lounge. She took his hand in both of hers.

"Flarey, dear. I wish I didn't think you needed to go away, but I really believe you do."

"People don't always get what they need."

"Flarey, I think we both need it."

"I didn't know you were run down, Rhoda. If you are, by all means run out to Chester without me."

"I'm not really run down. That's not why I want to

go. I want to go in order to get you away from all this. We're both run down; we're getting groggy. We're not getting on together. Let's take a summer off and see if we can't get to be real chums again."

"Why, Rhoda!" said O. F., jumping to his feet, "I had no idea that you were unhappy!"

"That is not to your credit, Flarey."

"But I don't understand it."

"Can't you see that we're getting further and further apart every day? Can't you understand that we're not the chums that we used to be? Flarey, I'll chuck my job if I have to in order to go to the country with you for the whole summer. You know what that means to me, you know how hard I fought to keep fit for that job all these years and you know how happy I was to get it in the end. Let's go, Flarey; let's get married all over again."

"Rhoda, darling, you know that I love you," he said, taking her in his arms.

"You love me, but you've forgotten how to live. Take me away from this hideous house that I built myself. Take me out to Chester, make love to me all over again. I'm not satisfied with living the way we do. We've got to straighten the whole thing out . . ."

He bent over her and kissed her. "Darling, I didn't know that you were so unhappy. Let's do as you say. Let's cut loose and go out there for the summer."

"Shall we take a walk and plan it?" said Rhoda excitedly.

"I'm sorry; I've some telephone calls to wait for. Can't we plan it here?"

They tried, but something in their immediate environment made it hard to create the illusion, and then the telephone did interrupt, and before dinner there were callers.

Nevertheless, Rhoda was exalted. She loved her husband. She thought that most of the real joy in life that

had come to her, had come through him. It was through her love for him that her nature had expanded and her sympathy released itself; and her perspective, though always far from perfect, had been greatly corrected by this marriage. She believed that O. F. had elements of greatness, that all the things that had been making him unbearable lately did not come from anything radically wrong in the essence of his personality, but rather through his inability to understand the superficial phases of life.

She realized suddenly that she had been profoundly unhappy for months, that she had been hiding her unhappiness from herself, and the thought that they could be alone with their love, on this farm, and that they could talk things over from the heart out, filled her with a quivering sensation of joy that she had never experienced before. There was something creative about it. There was Flarey's life, and there was her own life, and there was their life together that had seemed to die out, and now could be born again.

The blood rushed to her temples. She ran out upon the lawn and picked lilacs, the last of the year, and stealing back into Flarey's study she threw them all over him, his books, and his desk, slammed the door and went to hide in her own little study until he came to find her.

She had not realized before how tired and peevish she had become, how rudely she had been entertaining, and how mechanical her writing had been. What they needed was another honeymoon! They loved one another; they were both fine people at bottom; all their misunderstandings came from little things, and these, undoubtedly, were now clearing up. There was no longer the war; there was no longer the job hunting problem; there was no longer anything seriously wrong with their work.

She would try to swing her job to Charlie Gilman. He would like it well enough and take it in a burst of chiv-

alry. They could go to the farm as soon as Latin Grammar School let Gilman out for the summer. She had liked his book reviews immensely; he wrote in a clear, vivid, lucid style and his criticism was uniformly interesting whether he found anything to praise or to blame. His writing had a frothy humour about it, but you felt that there was something stronger than beer beneath the foam. Then was lightness in everything he touched, but there was also soundness of literary judgment and breadth of knowledge about him that made Rhoda wonder why Flarey did not have him come to one of his dinners for the distinguished. He had been brought up in the classical school, and then he had steeped himself in the French decadence, and if there was anything that recommended him for criticism more than his education, it was the fact that he had never experienced the slightest desire to have either a journalistic or a literary career.

Rhoda had been retiring before Gilman for the last month. Something in his manner and in his frequent attentions made her fear that he was falling in love with her, and knowing instinctively how precarious her position was with herself and her husband she had avoided any experience that might have rendered it more complicated. She did not precisely fear that this Englishman, who seemed to her so attractive and whose life and character remained so much a matter of romantic speculation, would play more of a part in her life than she wished. It was rather that she wanted to have her mind clear when she came to deal with Flarey. Only that morning young Wentworth had startled her, and she was glad, now that she knew that her love for O'Flarity Child could no longer prevent her from falling in love with others, that she had kept Charlie Gilman at a distance.

In most things she was generous by nature. The sacred integrity of her personality she guarded against every in-

trusion; but, when she was asked to give, she could keep nothing back. It filled her with joy to throw over her prospects with the *Tribune* if it really meant anything to Flarey. There was nothing she would not yield for their happiness provided only that she could give as a free agent.

Feeling as she did that Sunday evening, her barriers against Gilman fell to the ground. If he had loved her she could be very kind and sympathetic, but she had no fears of being swept off her feet while Flarey and she were rehabilitating their love and understanding.

She decided to throw her job his way if she could, and perhaps the substitution would work out so well that she would not have to renounce her post for good and all. It seemed a fitting reward for him anyway. He would like it and he was hard pressed for cash.

Rhoda felt deeply grateful to Gilman. When life had seemed blankest he had on more than one occasion renewed her courage. Not only had he strengthened her faith in herself, he had strengthened her faith in the American woman. Was it any wonder that she had found him increasingly attractive? When no one cared anything about what she was doing and treated her activities as though they were the chief irritants in Belmont society, he seemed always to understand what she was trying to do.

Some men attract women by spreading the peacock's tail, in fact, Rhoda thought, most men do. But Charlie Gilman never arrayed his attractive forces. He seemed while in her presence to be constantly trying to esteem the fine things in her nature that to most men were forever hidden. Was it any wonder that she had come to regard him as something of a dangerous character?

To set him up in her position, however, was more of a task than she realized. He had not a few enemies even before he was generally known. It was felt that he was

a foreigner, and that, being a master in the secondary school, he was only an amateur in journalism. The editor of the book review conventionally had the right to pick whom she chose but in giving books to this Englishman, who laughed at Henry Adams for taking himself too seriously when he was unwilling to tell the whole truth, and who thought when he read "Main Street" that he had already known that small towns were unpleasant and that side streets were to be preferred, Rhoda broke another convention which held that this editor had to send out the books within the limits of the Boston coterie.

CHAPTER XIII

O'Flarity Child rarely enjoyed his breakfast. Sometimes he could take an extra cup of coffee into his office and find it delectable while he read his newspaper and opened his mail but, like most people who flatter themselves that they work with the brains rather than the hands, he didn't get started amiably before noon. Had he been willing to recognize this and spend the morning frivolously or in exercise it would have been better both for himself and his associates, but instead he puttered about as though his mind were seriously at work.

The Monday morning following their discussion of vacation plans found him glancing over the papers while Rhoda, whose energy was always best in the morning, sat smoking a cigarette and blowing rings over her cup in the hope that one of them would find its way under the paper or over it. But they would not carry; it was spring and the windows and doors were open.

"Oh, Flarey," she said, "isn't it a lovely day!"

"I don't see how anybody can possibly get to work on a day like this," he said languidly.

"As if you ever had the courage to take a day off and loaf whole-heartedly!"

"What's that?" he asked.

"You could hear me better without the newspaper," said Rhoda.

"I didn't realize that you were actually talking, Rhoda. I don't see how one can so early in the morning."

"Do you know what I'm going to do to-day, Flarey?"

"Going down to work, aren't you?" She nodded. "Anything special besides?"

"Guess."

"I don't know."

"Stupid! I'm going to make arrangements for the summer!"

"Oh, I'd forgotten! That's fine!" said Flarey and picked up the newspaper again. Rhoda felt a sudden revulsion of feeling; the hopelessness of the situation overwhelmed her. She got up and went to the French window and looked out upon the bright green. There had been showers during the night and the dampness made the colour vivid in the early sunshine. She dreaded going over to Boston; she dreaded giving up her job. She would have liked, at that moment, to renounce the plan. Flarey only half remembered it. Did he really care for her enough to make it worth while?

She looked back into the room. He sat there idling over the journals, sipping his coffee; only his pipe gave him satisfaction. His mood was one of detached indifference. The sun came out from behind a cloud, and a shaft of light, striking an open window, was reflected upon Flarey. He drew his hand up first to shield his eye, and then passed his fingers through his hair caressingly. All at once he seemed to be what he had been when she first met him. There was no care, no irritation, no passionate impulse to conquer in his expression. His cheeks had for some inexplicable reason taken on their younger colour, and his deep blue eyes flashed in the light that had been thrown upon them. He was the same old Flarey who thought he had heart disease, who was studious without being aggressive, whose mind was clear, tolerant, curious, searching, and who never limited himself by material ends. It was once more the Flarey who cared for work only for its own sake.

"This man Lloyd George is certainly an incomprehensible person!" said O. F., laying down the paper. Full of good humour, he looked up at Rhoda. "Why do you smile at me?" he asked in the same peaceful, reassuring manner of his youth.

"Just because I like you a little bit," she whispered, blowing him a kiss, "and because I'm happy!"

She was happy. She kissed him, went to her workroom, and, filling her bag, hurried off to the trolley. It was too much of a bother to go in the motor. She took a seat by a window and looked out at the landscape blankly while the wind tossed back the loose ends of her short hair.

"The earth renews itself," she murmured, and thoughts hurried through her mind too quickly to leave any impression that could be reduced to words. Oh, what a glorious thing was the spring! Did it not promise the fulness of life?

It was not all Flarey's fault. She had herself once urged him to be more ambitious in a practical way. They both needed to stop and think, to learn something, if possible, from their experience.

She had no doubt that she could win back his love. After all, it was not only his love for her that she sought to win back; it was his love for philosophy and for life and for nature. Why should he, the biggest man she knew, be wasting himself upon petty things? How outrageous it all was!

At Cambridge she changed for the subway. Her spirits shifted from faith to doubt. After all, could he ever really understand what she was trying to do in life? Could any man?

There was Gilman. But Gilman loved women and lost all interest in himself in their presence. Did he really know what he was about? Flarey had many faults; for

one thing, he was too matter-of-fact. It seemed to him that he should have a wife and love her, and she should love him. But it was egotistic of him never to take an interest in any woman for her own sake. All the little things that men do for women he did, if at all, because he thought that a man should be in the nature of things considerate. Rhoda, who was herself no apostle of good form, thought Flarey's manners shocking. It was one thing, she believed, to have bad manners in a conventional sense, but quite another if the source of the rudeness is an exalted ego. Flarey needed succour from himself.

She got out at Park Street Under and went to the Tribune Building.

Meanwhile, Flarey left the table and went into his office. He threw open the window and looked out. It seemed to him that the spring had some compensating advantages even if it did knock a man out. June was a bad month for the department of philosophy, and he played with the idea of giving examinations at a time of the year when it would seem more natural to be deliberately thoughtful.

He looked out and observed a bed of flowers that Rhoda had planted. "When I am really established," he said to himself, "it would be fun to take an interest in flowers or bees or something like that." It was remarkable that Rhoda had had the time and patience to set out a bed of flowers. After all, she was a great girl, and he had been treating her shabbily. He would make amends directly. Married life ought to be a bit nobler than they had managed to make it, and it would all be much easier when she had given up her job.

About ten o'clock he walked over to Arlington. There was an examination in one of his courses that morning and he wanted to get his papers to grade them as soon as possible. It was delightful walking, and he was sorry when

he reached the top of the hill and saw the tower of Paul Revere Hall cut into the horizon. Some of the students were still writing when he arrived, so he strolled over to the office to pick up his mail.

To his surprise there was a note from Professor Amah of Johns Hopkins. He wrote that he was unable to fulfil his engagement to lecture at Columbia University Summer School that year, and that he thought he could swing the appointment to O'Flarity Child, if he would accept it. Flarey was pleased that Amah had thought of him, and that he believed him suited to take up his courses. One had to do with contemporary philosophy and the war, and the other dealt with symbolism and logical theory. Neither would require very much preparation, as summer school work does not ordinarily probe the depths, and the lectures would have the advantage of putting him before audiences that had come great distances to hear the famous Professor Amah. The classes would be composed largely of instructors from Western colleges, people who generally read philosophical books and journals. He saw a few hundred eager students hastening to buy the next work of the instructor who had been substituted for the great Amah. He was not mercenary about it; the sale meant nothing to him. He wanted to build up a chain of readers in the provinces. He wanted to enhance his personal following. Could he afford to let the opportunity go by? That was the question, or, putting it in another form, would anything better turn up that summer?

He doubted it, and, taking a sheet of embossed university paper, he thanked Professor Amah heartily, and said that, while it would embarrass him to try to fill his place, he would accept the honour with humiliation mingled with profound gratitude and satisfaction of a personal nature.

Posting the letter hurriedly he sighed with relief. That settled the summer. After commencement he would run

down to New York and look for quarters. Suddenly he thought of Rhoda. That would not be her idea of giving up the whole summer for rest. She would have to be convinced that it was a good thing, but it was easy to convince Rhoda. She was such a reasonable woman!

The excitement of answering Professor Amah's letter tired him suddenly, and after picking up his examination papers he took a cab. He would have to hurry in order to prepare these lectures; and when he got home he sat right down to work.

Leaving downtown the bag in which she almost always carried odd bits of work for the evening or early mornings, Rhoda returned to Belmont a little sooner than usual. "I'm too excited," she said to Flarey as soon as she could find him, "to do anything to-day but plan!"

He looked up cautiously. "These papers," he said, "are perfectly ghastly!"

"You poor dear thing!" said Rhoda and ran away from him. She did not want to bother him while he was grading examination papers. Her sympathy for the students was as warm as though she were still in classes. And besides, she wanted to hide in her little office and laugh a bit in sheer joy, and perhaps cry a bit too.

She had not been able to make a bargain with the editor-in-chief. He must have disliked her. He said that they didn't like Gilman and didn't like his work. "He hasn't a newspaper manner and if we let him take the book review, he wouldn't know the right people to ask for reviews." There was something in that; she had taken it for granted that Gilman would ask her, but of course she could not expect the chief to accept such things on faith. And then, he went on to say, they didn't think enough of her to keep the position open. They had taken her with the hope that she "would work herself into it." She was more a matter of promise than actuality. If she left for the

whole summer they would have to put someone else in, and it would be unfair to expect anyone to take it wholeheartedly unless it were a permanent offer. Without a moment's hesitation Rhoda said she would go; she would remain only until the end of the week to finish work she had already begun.

During dinner—fortunately there were no guests that evening—Flarey was silent and thoughtful. Rhoda wanted to tell him of what she had done but something restrained her, perhaps the hope that he would ask her about it himself, and it was not until they had taken their coffee out to the veranda that Flarey showed signs of dropping his preoccupations. Sometimes a very little thing would serve to break up his absorption, this time it was his tobacco.

"You bought very much better cigars than usual this time," he said, lying down in the swing.

"It's odd the way you know enough to distinguish between them when you haven't forethought enough to order them for yourself."

"I say, Rhoda," he said, "did you hear that I signed up for Columbia Summer School to-day?"

"Why, Flarey, you absurd creature! You're going to Chester with me this summer."

"Of course, Rhoda dear, summer school will be out shortly after the middle of August, and we'll have a full month there before coming back."

Rhoda stood up; she felt at once that she had suffered a cruel blow but she did not instantly comprehend whence it came. "When did you do this thing?" she asked excitedly.

O'Flarity told her the circumstances of the morning. "I didn't know you'd be so disappointed, dear, but you know I can't go back on my word."

"You have gone back on your word." Rhoda was pale;

she trembled piteously. Her hands grasped the back of a chair. Flarey had never seen her that way before; it quite startled him.

"Please don't take it that way," he said.

"How did you expect me to take it?" She smiled scornfully, and so foreign was the expression to her that it again startled Flarey to see those lips recoil against him.

"I didn't really think about it seriously, Rhoda. I knew you would be disappointed no less than I, but I hoped you would understand. These lectures are really of no importance. I can manage them without much effort. As a matter of fact, if I worked them up as they should be worked up, nobody would understand them in that crowd. Summer school is perhaps a shade lower than correspondence school. Now we can have a jolly time of it in a furnished apartment in New York. You know New York is a sort of Mecca in the summer. Lots of people go there who never have an opportunity any other time. It's a great chance for me to meet a lot of distinguished people, don't you know? I don't mean people at Columbia, though of course I'm anxious to meet a number of people on the Columbia staff if they're still in town. I mean New York lawyers and bankers—I mean I'd like to get a chance to meet Aberdean Duke again and the set he runs in."

Rhoda said nothing. She felt vaguely that she controlled her anger, the consciousness of which was not without pride. If only she could keep her hands from trembling and her knees did not feel so faithlessly impotent. It seemed to her as though the past and the present had lost their usual relationship, as though Flarey were a stranger, and she a stranger to herself. The very name of Aberdean Duke intensified the sensations. He had been Flarey's most intimate friend; he had lived with them for a while in Paris. Flarey had never understood why he had lost his friendship, but Rhoda knew then that he

had dropped out of their lives because he feared Flarey's growing philistinism.

She heard a passing automobile and the merry voices of pleasure-seekers; she smelt the fragrance of her sweet peas some of which she had picked for the table; and she felt the luxury of a long, sweet June evening that seemed to inspire emotion so different from hers.

"Why don't you say something?" he asked.

"I have nothing whatever to say."

"We ought to have an awfully good time in New York. Boat rides and evenings together, and then a month at the Orchards." He advanced and she sank into her chair as though the thought of meeting him without spreading her arms was too terrible to think of. Usually insensitive to her emotional moods, he felt her repulsion at once and hesitated. He took her hand from the arm of the chair, but it was limp and cold. If only it possessed some life, some warmth! He pressed it to his lips, as he used to affect that year in France, and later by way of reminiscence, but she did not, as she used to, press her hand to his lips by way of joyful response. He touched her hair, but that only reminded him of how she would formerly move her head gently to meet his caress. Finally he leaned down and kissed her lips; they were motionless.

"Rhoda, I'm sorry you take this so hard. Perhaps I should go down alone and leave you here if you think you'd have a rotten time in New York."

"At what time this morning did you accept this offer?" Rhoda asked.

"Oh, about eleven o'clock."

"But you didn't think it worth while to let me know at once."

"To be perfectly honest, Rhoda dear, I had no idea that you would consider it a matter of much importance.

Would it have meant anything to you if I had told you then?"

"Yes."

"I'm sorry, but I don't think that it makes much difference to us now, does it?"

"Not to us, O'Flarity Child, to me. If you had called me up at once, I could have kept my job. I gave it up about two in the afternoon."

"Aren't you getting Gilman to hold it for you?"

"I couldn't. I had to keep it or leave it, and I left it. I left it for good and all . . . the only job I ever had that I really loved."

Her own words brought instant relief to her emotion and she burst into tears. Flarey had an impulse to throw himself upon her, but she held him off with a gesture and then fled the room.

He went for a walk. He hated to leave the house while Rhoda was so wrought up but it was constitutional with him to pull a cap down over his forehead and swing along a road poking things with his stick when his nerves or emotions were not what they should be. Usually nerves drove him forth for exercise but to-night he thought that he was insecure emotionally. He wasn't quite certain whether he loved his wife as much as he had grown accustomed to think he did, but he was sure that a man would be a fool to let himself live a life of intense emotion.

A woman can annoy a man. My God! how a woman can try a man's patience! She insists upon attention, she insists upon respect for all the casual ideas and ideals that emanate from her inconsistent and emotional nature. She loves her husband; but, whenever things are going better than usual, how she will come in like a tempest and upset everything! Is it because at such times she is not exacting her full tax of attention? Was Rhoda really jealous

of his career? Was it that that had caused the fury to descend?

In his wanderings he turned toward Arlington habitually, and before he knew it he was passing the telephone office on Massachusetts Avenue. He stopped and looked at the window with its great blue bell fastened upon the plate glass and he watched the women operators inside idly knitting while they waited for calls. It was stupid of him to stand there looking at the painfully uninteresting administration of a telephone office and he wondered what had attracted him there. Suddenly it occurred to him that he could wire Professor Amah at Johns Hopkins and intercept his letter. He started for the door, and then held back.

There was nothing fundamentally wrong with the acceptance, he thought. He really wanted to take the lectures. His health surely didn't require the whole summer, and if Rhoda had given up her job on the possibility of their spending three months together, it was a mistake much to be regretted. Those things do occur now and then. After all it would be better to patch the matter up than to give in to it wholly by calling off the summer at Columbia. Besides it was a matter of some importance. He couldn't have been expected to have foreseen it. The job was nothing in itself, to be sure, but it would enlarge his sphere of influence, it would add to his empire. No, he would not wire. He walked home.

Rhoda was standing alone in front of the house when he got there. Her figure, outlined against the lights within, suggested to Flarey a type of woman foreign to what he thought her nature to be. It added to his annoyance that she appeared the picture of passivity. The head was bent forward pensively, the hands clasped in front, and she seemed to be looking into the flower beds, but he was not sure that she really saw anything. As he approached her

he perceived the regular heaving of her bosom; this evening it seemed faster and deeper than usual.

"I say, Rhoda," he said quite spontaneously, "you're so beautiful out here in the garden."

"It's like your beauty, Flarey. It belies what is within."

"I belie Aberdean's portrait all right, and that's all the beauty I ever had."

The very mention of that picture caused Rhoda to stifle a little cry of pain. She had fallen in love with that picture before she had really known Flarey. The day after he first called she went to see it, and again and again that spring she had gone to see that portrait. She thought that she trusted the painter's judgment better than her own in the analysis of Flarey's character. She had accepted him as a thing of beauty that needs no analysis.

"I'm sorry I said that. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I'm sorry my personal appearance creates a false impression."

She looked at him fully in the face. "I don't know that it does. I was at fault; I mentioned it first. Oh, Flarey, let there be no hard words or unkind feelings between us now. I love you so terribly and . . ."

"Rhoda, darling, I'm so frightfully sorry that this thing happened. I don't deserve to be loved by you. Come, let's try to forget about it."

"Flarey, there's a way out of it that you haven't thought of. Why not wire to Amah? The letter won't reach him till morning. Then you wouldn't be breaking your word to either of us." Her eyes were bright with tears and she turned away in order that he should not see, and be moved by them to do what she wished. She clutched her throat with her hand in an effort to suppress a sensation that would only add to her panic, and hurried into the living room.

"I thought of that," said Flarey, coming after her and

sitting down, "but I couldn't bring myself to act upon it, much as I should like to. You see, the more I think of this the more convinced I am that it's the thing for us to do. Now since you've given up your job, come down with me. We'll have a great time, and it will be as good an opportunity for you as for me."

"Oh, Flarey, I wish you loved your work more and yourself less."

"That remark seems to me quite unnecessary and quite irritating when I'm trying very hard to conciliate you. It's because I love my work that I'm going."

"Liar."

"I don't see how that helps the situation."

"I am not meaning to hurt your feelings, Flarey dear. All I mean is to undo some of the harm I've done you myself."

"Well, that's a poor beginning. The fault is not that I'm not devoted to my work. And I don't think that you've ever done me the slightest harm, Rhoda. All you have meant to me is good. This whole affair breaks me up. I feel as though I did you a wrong, and I don't see how to right it without doing us both a wrong."

"Oh, what I said is true, Flarey. Your love for philosophy is restrained by your love for yourself. Every phase of your love for me is self-love. If you had changed your plan because you had worked yourself up over labours that you dared not leave, if you had been too preoccupied with your work to ring me up this morning, I could understand and perhaps forgive. If the reason why you neglected me and betrayed me as you did to-day was because of your love for your work, I could abide having such a mistress for a rival. But it's career-worship; it's a sort of harlot that drags you away from me."

"I think that your language is pretty strong, Rhoda. I think that you are saying things you will regret. It's

hardly comprehensible to me that having known me and loved me for years you could think so poorly of my motives."

"That's because you're trying to listen to me for the first time in years. You have not tried to get my meaning. It has been too embarrassing to you to understand me lately."

"Please don't be a misunderstood woman, Rhoda. I couldn't bear that."

"I won't, Flarey. You'll understand me soon enough."

"Perhaps it would be better if I went to New York alone, Rhoda. We may be seeing too much of each other. Perhaps that's my trouble. It seems somehow unnatural that you should be the first to accuse me of egoism and selfishness with regard to my work. You've been anxious about your own career. You've been jealous of your own work. You have fought for it constantly. Never have I known you to take it lightly."

"I've made a good many mistakes. I've gone after a career when I should have gone after work. I have insisted on taking a regular job when I should have been completely absorbed in professional work. I've been small about it; I've done petty things; I've sold out cheap more than once. But you can never know how hard I have tried to raise my own ability and character. You can never know how hard I've had to fight to be where I am—or rather, where I was this morning. I was never fit for any of the professions; I never had as good a mind as yours. But I can say this, O'Flarity Child, I never went back on my word to you; and, though I did dream of a career, it was chiefly because a career has usually been something that women couldn't have. I never sacrificed my honour for it."

"No, you never have, Rhoda. You've made me feel pretty small in some ways. I'll try and make it up to you.

Once I'm really established, I'll throw off all this career stuff and get really to work. It was wrong of me, in a way. I had the jump on all the fellows of my own age who were starting as tutors in phil., and I felt as though I had to assert my own superiority. In my mind, the only way to do it was to clean up on them. And, by God, I have! I'm the best known young man in the field."

"You are, Flarey, I have no doubt. I used to think that you were great both as a mind and a character, but I've lost faith in you lately. I've lost faith because you are seeking a reputation for genius directly, rather than developing yourself and trusting to God and your friends to do the rest.

"I give you this plague as a memory of me to carry to New York with you, that though I loved you with all the strength that I possessed, I saw you sink before me to a state of moral feebleness. You're a sort of glorified harlot, you're an intellectual prostitute."

They were silent a long time. Flarey was deeply wounded. He did not know how to meet an assault. He had no experience with life in which such terminology was relevant. He had never been seriously doubted. His whole manner had dispelled all accusation. The blood rushed to his cheeks. Anger, too, was new to him. Sometimes in the army he had experienced similar emotion, but he had managed his military career on a different plane. It never had anything to do with the rest of his life. Military life had been real, but it was the reality of grand opera. Such things had always seemed to him so far away from life as he lived it. He was as dumb as though he had been called upon to address a Salvation Army meeting in terms of the species of Christianity that that organization dispenses from street corners.

He sank back into his chair and covered his eyes with his hands.

"It's not true," he cried; "it's not true!"

"When I'm gone, Flarey, learn to love someone else. Learn to love her for what she is, not for what she is to you. Learn to love as I have loved you, then you will have something to philosophize about. Then you will begin to wonder what people want careers for. You will begin to wonder why you did not spend your time in pursuit of the noble and beautiful things in life. Flarey, dear, when you learn to love, you won't find it so hard to believe the cruel things I said to you to-night. When you really love, Flarey, you will accuse yourself more bitterly."

She sank down in a heap by his side. He was aware that she caressed him, but he could not feel her hands. He thought her a phantom and then wondered whether he was not himself a phantom. Suddenly he heard her speaking again.

"Flarey, I forgot to tell you that I have to go back to the office this evening, and I have to work so late that I shall probably remain in town overnight. You leave for New York on Thursday or Friday, don't you?"

He nodded.

"Perhaps we shan't see each other first, so good-bye."

CHAPTER XIV

It was fortunate that O'Flarity Child had no lectures that morning. At dawn he found himself still in his office where he had spent the night in a chair. Rhoda's attack seemed to paralyze his action, and his mind became flooded with unwelcome thoughts that refused to arrange themselves in any sequence.

He was accustomed to success in everything he attempted and he had failed so rarely that he no longer undertook anything where failure seemed within the range of possibility. But this morning he felt that he had been overwhelmingly defeated, though he could not actually say where the failure was.

Stating it briefly, he had had a quarrel with his wife and she had accused him of a great many unpleasant things. She had refused to go to New York with him, and she had packed off suddenly to spend the night in town. There was nothing extraordinary in that, but somehow or other he could not picture her return in his mind, he did not believe that she would return and if someone had said she was coming, he would have fled as from a miracle. It was no mere quarrel. Her turning against him was the expression of something fundamental in her nature, and her attitude toward him had changed completely. They could never be the same to each other again.

Child had always despised people whose marital relations proved unsatisfactory. They seemed to him undignified, and their disagreements the evidence of their vulgarity. He loathed himself that morning; he did not believe he could ever be the same man again. It wounded him deeply; it would leave scars.

Already he began to be aware that there was some

weight in her attack. Perhaps he was not so much of a character, after all. He was practically without friends and he realized that morning that for all his large acquaintance there was no one who loved him or whom he loved sufficiently to take into his confidence. People associated with him either because they liked to have their names linked with his, or because he liked to have his name linked with theirs.

He was getting into the habit of taking the university too seriously, and taking too much interest in himself as one of the promising younger set. Rhoda had once warned him that one of his dedications might be misconstrued. He had written: "To Palmerson Laureate, one of the youngest of my friends," and P. L., a very great old gentleman of eighty-three, happens to be one of the most celebrated historians living. Flarey remembered Rhoda's face when she read it: "You seem to say that you wish it widely known that you associate with this man on terms of equality." Perhaps there was something ill-smelling about it; he really dedicated that book to his legend. But Rhoda's error was that she could not see how temporary all this was, that it was the price he had to pay for his success.

And she was to some extent right about his work. He was sorry about the summer school lectures, but nothing could be done about them now. He would go to Columbia and do what he could; perhaps a few letters would help straighten out the affair.

Remorse of a sort took hold of him. He had made a failure of his marriage, and it was clearly his own fault. He could not say that his wife had not loved him. Luckily he could not convince himself that there was another man in the case, though he resented her affair with this Mr. Gilman. It was her irreconcilable nature that had turned them all awry.

He heard the maids stirring and looked at his watch. It was eight o'clock and he got up and switched off the lights. The embarrassment with which he faced the help that morning he added to his list of Rhoda's offenses, and he took his breakfast without a word other than his usual good morning.

At nine he started to correct his papers, but his lids were so heavy that he could not keep them up even by resting his forehead upon the palm of his hand and stretching the eyebrows. He thought that it would be a kindly act to telephone to Rhoda that morning and ask how she was, and he looked up the *Tribune* office in the book. It seemed so strange that he had never telephoned to her office before! Just as he was about to ask for the number, however, it struck him that Rhoda should ring him. She had left him, and she should make the first advances. He put down the telephone with regret. He really wanted to speak with her, but his pride was too strong. He was a great man. It was all right for youngsters and other men to call after women, but he had to wait until they called him. After all, the complete equality of the sexes was a notion that distorted people's ideas and made a lot of senseless trouble in the world. In action, a man's mind was preoccupied with anything rather than women. No, he would not call her! But she would call him as she always had hitherto after a quarrel, and he would stay near the bell, so that he should hear and wake up from the sleep that was closing down upon him. He threw himself upon the divan and closed his eyes.

Meanwhile the morning dawned for Rhoda in Emy Goodshoe's apartment in Boston. Though she had slept hardly at all, she awoke with a start at the strange environment in which she found herself. Fortunately, Emy had gone out of town Monday and Rhoda had not seen her the night before. It was well, she thought, to be alone for a

day or so. She shuddered. Her face would betray her; her eyes were piteously heavy, and she knew how she looked that morning without going to the glass. She hid her face in the pillows and it was some time before she had the courage to get up.

It comforted her to have a friend before whom she needed to explain nothing, and who would let her do exactly as she pleased. Thank God, there are some things in life that seem to remain constant. She had once given up friendship for love, and love, she thought, had betrayed her. It had flared up and burned her; it had left her soul parched and charred.

She made herself coffee from an electric percolator, the sound and odour of which carried her back to the days when she had lived in a little apartment. Then, remembering the day's work before her, she took up the morning paper and tried to stem her tears by reading it. Finally she got up and walked to the office. As she crossed the Common she recalled how she had gone to work the morning before, murmuring that the earth renews itself, and she walked more rapidly as she felt the tears gathering again. No longer could she renew herself; Flarey had taken the spring out of her life. She felt old, that morning, and frightened by her own age. She felt that she no longer had the right to think of life as something that lay before her. She had hoped for so much, but she had waited too long.

The elevator stopped at her floor and she got out hesitatingly. In order to reach her little office she had to pass through a large room full of others, and it took all the courage of her soul to open the door and break for it.

But the moment she used what courage she had more came to her, and as she closed the outer door and made for her office, the faces of her fellow workers gave her a moment's amusement as they rendered their usual saluta-

tions. Besides her extraordinary appearance, there was the news that she was about to leave to stir up an interest in her that morning. Everybody seemed to know that she did not really want to go. The faces of her antagonists lit up with pleasure on seeing her, and here and there a face expressed sympathy, which was even harder to bear. But when she shut the door of her little room, she felt immeasurably better and began doing little inconsequential things to take her mind off herself. She slammed her books about; she filled her pen; she opened her mail and made up half a column of literary gossip.

About eleven-thirty Gilman came in. She thought that she received him as she always had, that any trace of the state of her feelings had been completely obliterated by this time. He had come upon business, and the business was attended to with her characteristic dispatch. Finally, when he rose to go, she rose too, and extended her hand.

"I'm terribly sorry to tell you that I finish here at the end of the week, and that probably means that you do too."

"Don't mention it, Rhoda," he said, laughing. "I'm only sorry that you're going if you don't wish it yourself."

"I do and I don't. I'll explain it all some other time. Good-by, Charlie."

"May I ask you to lunch?"

"Why do you ask me to-day? Can't you see that I'm not fit company for anybody?"

"You'll forgive me if I tell you frankly?"

"Yes," said Rhoda, smiling.

"It's because . . . hang it all! I don't know how to express it, Rhoda . . . it's because I fancy that to-day you might tell me a great deal about yourself that I don't know. You're all very near the surface this morning—that is, the part of you that I've never met is right on top!"

"Why, how perfectly stupid of you! Can't you see that I'm a beaten woman to-day?"

"Beaten? Triumphant! I don't know what you've done, but you look as though you were still standing on your feet."

"I'll not have lunch with you, if you don't mind, but you may dine with me on Friday."

"Delighted, as you Americans say," said Gilman, bowing himself out.

Then she wondered whether she really meant to ask him. She hoped to finish her week's work Friday morning, and go back to Belmont. Flarey would leave on Thursday night, and there need be no unpleasant parting scene.

For a moment she doubted whether Flarey was leaving on Thursday or Friday, so she reached for the telephone and asked for her own number. A sleepy voice answered.

"Is that you, Flarey?"

"Yes, Rhoda."

"Did you say that you were leaving on Thursday night?"

"Thursday on the midnight."

"Well, that's all I wanted to know."

"Am I going to see you first?"

"No, Flarey. Good-bye and have a good time."

"Good-bye."

That was all. As she put down the receiver, she felt that she had seen him for the last time, that everything was over between them. Of course they might chance to meet, or something might make him overcome his vanity enough to present himself in the modified form of telephoning, but she determined to avoid it.

Why keep patching things up forever? They had tried for seven years, or at least she had; she had given way to him on almost every point. Anything his career demanded had been his. But now that he had actually arrived, she did not think that she need concern herself with his happiness. It had been time for him to make a sacrifice for

her. Firmly as she believed in his genius, she saw him behaving like a cad.

Rhoda knew now what she had wanted all her life. She had wanted to be loved, and loved as a person. Sex is a silly thing; but love is a great thing. It was not enough to be loved as sweet girl grown modestly mature. She sought the recognition of her personality, of her measure of wisdom, of her capacity for life; in fact, she had wanted him to sustain the quality of love she felt in his regard for her before they married. But she had asked too much! First it slumbered; then it died.

She never thought her mind the equal of his as an instrument. She had not thought her character the equal of his until very recently. But one discrepancy was not exclusive; it was not sufficient to make friendship between them impossible. She had tried to keep up with him and so far as his work was concerned she had had no difficulty. Only the side shows, the political scheming, the innumerable banquets, dinners, and the diplomatic affairs of the fraternity of successful men, had been beyond her.

To her surprise she did not feel the loss of her position as poignantly as she had feared. The sorrow that she felt at breaking with O. F. obliterated her sense of loss in minor matters. She wished that the last week were over; she wanted to be alone to think out what she should do next. She had been shorn of all that she prized in life, and she wondered how to begin all over again.

The week was full of agony for her. By Friday noon she was free and, after a hasty lunch with Emy who had returned to Boston that morning, she took the car for Belmont. It was with conflicting emotion that she hurried up the road to her house. Flarey had gone—she had communicated with the servants that morning—and she would be alone in her own home to think out the solution of her problem.

She opened the windows and let in the air; she ordered tea and sat down to think. She loved the house sometimes, as Flarey never could.

She was free. The week of sorrow had been too intense, and her joy in her freedom came as an hysterical relief. She knew that she could never be Rhoda Lispenyard again, that her new freedom was more precious than anything she had previously experienced. "I was a wilful, self-centred girl; a testy young woman; a joyful lover; a neglected wife. I can't understand this new freedom. There's something bewildering and intoxicating about it."

There was a noise upon the porch, and Wentworth came in. She was glad to see him and held out both hands. "Hello, Went," she said. "I know Sunday was your birthday and we were together all morning, but it seems months since I've seen you, dear boy! What are you doing out of school?"

"I'm through for the year, Rhoda, and father seems to be away, so I have nothing to do for a change."

Rhoda smiled. His condescension was so like Flarey's! She had tried so hard to teach him not to say that he was calling because he had nothing else to do, but she had worked against nature. The boy had not yet reached the stage where he could call upon a lady without feeling that he was doing himself a slight injustice, and that was the most obvious way to mitigate the violence he did his better nature. But Rhoda could so easily forgive in Wentworth what she despised in Flarey.

"Sit down and have tea with me. When will father be back?"

"To-morrow or the next day."

"I'm anxious to see him," she said absent-mindedly. He looked at her; he knew that something was wrong.

"I say, Rhoda, you look a bit down in the mouth. Want to take a walk with me? Do you good."

"Perhaps I shall after tea. Sit down and tell me how you did on your examinations. May I serve you?"

"Please. You know, I don't usually drink tea in the afternoon, Rhoda . . . We don't romp about the way we used to a few years ago. Sometimes we try, as we did Sunday, but we don't get any fun out of it now!"

"Are you sure you didn't enjoy it then? . . . It was all very joyful for me!"

"You . . . Rhoda!" Wentworth blushed. "Yes, it did make me happy, but it was all a different kind of happiness. I'm growing older and I don't know whether to hate or love it."

"Please do neither. Don't love it, because youth is the most glorious thing in the world, and don't hate it, because the years have their own compensations. You should be happy in your youth; it has infinite promise and hope and possibility."

"Age must have something to it, though. Father is always telling me how incomplete youth is, how impossible it is for a young person to get any real balance, or understanding, or happiness. That's Aristotle! The older I get the more I think Aristotle the bane of father's life."

"Sometimes things that are passing are very beautiful and satisfying in themselves. Isn't the bud as beautiful as the flower? Life is not a progression; it's a cycle. Sometimes you plan things for the maturity you're so anxious for. You plan for better or worse, and then the whole thing crumbles to the ground."

"Rhoda, you look awful! Do tell me what the matter is." He approached her chair and took her yielding hands in his; he looked searchingly into her eyes, and was aware of how little he knew her whom he believed his best friend. She kept looking away, and he sat down at her feet with his back to her.

"I should rather not, Went. Just believe in me; some day you'll know all about it."

Wentworth lifted his head and leaned back, looking into her face again. His cheek touched her dress and he stroked her hands as they rested in her lap. He was very nearly in tears, and the boyish nonchalance through which he usually hid his emotions or falsified them vanished. He was transparent; his lips trembled and his voice broke down.

"There are lots of things you can't tell me about, Rhoda, and I don't expect you to. But I think there's a lot you might tell me. I'll feel just terribly hurt if I'm not a good enough chum of yours to be able to share a morsel of your suffering."

Rhoda had always thought there was something pathetically appealing in this boy, and she had an impulse to take him in her arms, but she did not act upon it. To-day, she thought, a benediction was the better form of blessing.

"Went," she said, "your love has always touched me deeply."

"How could I help loving you, Rhoda; you were a sort of mother and chum combined. You've been everything to me!"

"No, not quite everything, Went."

"I mean, except father."

"Well, you may never have thought that I, too, have been lonely in life, and that you have meant a great deal to me. Some day, I promise you, I'll try to tell you all about it, but now you must take it on faith." She raised his hand to her lips and kissed it, and the tears gathered in his eyes. "Come," she said, "I'll walk you home."

They walked without a word, and when they reached the turn in the road, Rhoda lagged behind. Wentworth turned in surprise and stood watching her.

"Went," she said, "I'll tell you this much. You see that

house of mine? I built that on the solid ground of maturity. I thought when I had that brick and wood put together there that life was going to be . . . what it should be . . . until the end of one of us or both of us. I was wrong. There was nothing firm to build upon. All that is gone out of my life. I don't know whether I'll see you again, but if I don't I'll write to you."

"Where's Flarey?" was all he could think to ask.

"No longer with me, Went. Does it matter where?"

"You've left him? I mean—he's left you!"

"The first was right. I left him."

"Oh, my God!" said Went.

"I'm saying good-bye to you right here and now, my boy."

"Good-bye, Rhoda."

"Good-bye, and remember me."

She walked home quickly. Her emotion had brought colour to her cheeks. She had loved that boy, and her watchful care of him seemed to her at that moment the one satisfactory thing of her life. She wondered why she had acted as though she expected never to see him again. Did she have some special prevision of what was going to happen in her life? She had not decided to leave Belmont, nor had Went shown any signs of a speedy departure. Usually they saw each other three or four times a week. Her bidding him farewell shocked her; it seemed so natural, so logical, and yet if he had asked her why she could not have told.

Exhilarating as her consciousness of freedom was, she felt constrained and defensive, as though expecting a blow without knowing the direction from which it would come.

Upon arriving at home she decided to get her desk in order. There was no accumulation of detail, but she felt, as she did upon parting with Went, that if anything should happen she wished the domestic affairs to be up to date,

and the bills paid. She busied herself with her check book, brought the balance down, and then looked over her mail and felt certain that, if death overtook her unexpectedly, no unseemly disorder would reveal itself. Or if, for example, Flarey came home and she were not there, he would find it difficult enough to manage the house without a state of confusion in her accounts. Her will was the only paper she felt doubtful about, but in order to look that over it would be necessary to call at Hallam Seebohm's office.

Suddenly the maid came in and reminded her that it was past time to dress for dinner, and she remembered that Gilman was coming to spare her the agony of being alone.

She sought her best gown, one that should have been put away for the summer but had been left out because she had been too busy to attend to it, and she asked herself why she did so. It was a gown that she usually spared from motives of economy, but economy, surely, was not an element in her confused mood that evening.

"You're an old woman," she said to herself, "you never used to care what you wore!" It was only too true. Flarey had cared about her clothes; she, except for a month or two after the inheritance of Uncle Tad's property, gave her gowns no thought. But now, surely, it did no harm to make an appearance. The lines gathering in her face had been drawn by a realist. There was no escaping the facts. She was almost middle-aged, and she was unhappy. Not unhappy for the moment, but profoundly wretched, and from the way in which she appeared in the glass, she had been so for a long, long time. It seemed as if she had been called upon to pay some long outstanding debts all at once, though it left her prostrate.

She sat down and tried to think. Who was this Gilman

downstairs? She did not really know him. And why had she asked him to dinner at a time when life seemed so utterly unbearable, when she was unable to make up her mind about anything? Was she going to take counsel from Gilman?

The maid had long since announced dinner, and she knew that he was there. She picked up a lace scarf and draped it about her luxurious shoulders. She could not answer the questions that troubled her.

After a hasty dressing of her short hair and a final glance in the mirror, less from vanity than to see whether she was presentable, Rhoda went down.

It was a black satin gown with a veil of chiffon that made its lines indefinite, yet clinging to her form enough to suggest its beauty. There was nothing sharp about it; even the short skirt came to an end without a harsh line. Her shawl was a simple white Irish crocheted affair, the lace of which revealed itself beautifully upon the black.

Gilman was standing not far from the foot of the stairs. He had taken a book from the shelves. His hair seemed grayer than ever to-night, but there was something quite lovely in the way in which it clung loosely to his head. Rhoda had always said of Gilman that he was the only man she ever met who never knew whether he was dressed for the evening or not.

"I'm afraid I've kept you waiting," said Rhoda, shaking his hand.

"I've been too much amused to notice it," he said frankly.

"Shall we sit right down?"

He nodded and put down his book.

"Is Mr. Child out of town?" he asked when he saw the table set for two.

"Mr. Child is in New York, getting ready for a couple of courses at Columbia University Summer School. Pro-

fessor Amah of Johns Hopkins was to have given them but he has to go abroad."

"I must say I should prefer to be Mr. Amah," said Gilman, laughing. "You are joining him presently, I suppose?"

"No, I'm not."

Gilman looked up. He was aware of having surmised more than he had a right to. He did not quite know how to back out, so he thought it best to explain away, if possible, his unhappy observation.

"I thought you chucked the *Tribune* in order to spend the summer with your husband."

"You have a lot of intuition," said Rhoda.

"Apparently not enough to keep my feet from trespassing now and then." Though there was much amenity about his manner, Rhoda always felt that he was fundamentally a serious person. His character baffled her. She knew that she was strongly attracted to him and she knew that she was attracted to him because, more than any man she had ever met, he seemed not to be interested in himself but fascinated by life as he observed it round about him.

"I didn't hang out any no-trespassing signs, so I can't very well hold you responsible."

"You know, of all the women I've met in America, you put me most at my ease."

"How are you going to spend the summer?" she asked after a pause.

"I thought I was going to spend my vacation from school by entrenching myself as an American journalist, but your leaving the *Tribune* makes something of a difference."

"I am really not certain that it should. You would have a hard time working in without anyone to set you up but I'm sure that if you once got started you could do very

well indeed, and give up your grammar-school teaching which must be rather irksome if I understand you."

"Well, rather," he said significantly.

"Why don't you try?"

"I'm too old. I liked doing book reviews for you but I doubt whether I have it in me now to stand the pressure of American journalism. At any rate, I bought some horses yesterday, and I've got to sell them all at a profit."

"Horses!" cried Rhoda. "How exquisitely romantic!"

"That seems to me a much more amusing way of making money and no less of service to humanity."

"Oh, it's perfectly glorious!"

"I was afraid you'd think it low of me. You see, it's really a sorry state of affairs, but I've been so much in the saddle that I always get back to it, that is, when there's nothing else to preoccupy me."

He went on to explain himself. Something about Rhoda's seriousness made him ashamed of the light side of his nature. He had apparently been something of a sportsman in his youth, and an expert horseman. Being in a foreign country and having no associations or occupations to keep him from acting the part of a dealer, he would buy horses every now and then, drive them or ride them for a while, and then sell.

They finished dinner still talking of stables, and then went out upon the porch. It was a fine night and Rhoda had been diverted from her unhappiness by this talk of horses. If there would only be no end to it!

"I wish I could do something like that," she said at length. "It would mean everything to me!"

"Why?" he asked, lighting a cigarette.

"Why, because, Charlie, my life is now something like what I imagine yours to have been. I wish I could do something that would be absorbing and exciting, something that would take my interest out of myself and my

personal problems. Breaking horses would be so wonderful! If only I could never think of myself I'd be happy!"

"Rhoda," said Gilman. He had a way of knitting his brows together with a twinkle and a smile without indicating more than sympathy by his expression. "My dear Rhoda," he repeated, "don't you think you have told me a good deal without making a complete story of it?"

"Perhaps I have, but is there any reason why I should tell you any more?"

"Only because I might be a better friend if I knew the whole story. And because I think I have a right to know whether there's an open door." He was sitting on the rail of the porch; his fine profile stood out against the twilight.

"I'll tell you the whole story," she said, and without going into unnecessary detail she gave him an account of her life, and of the events of the past week.

"You know," he said, after she was silent, "both of you have so much in life that ought to make you supremely happy, if there is such a thing. Child is really an awfully fine chap. I never liked him really for the same reasons that you found it impossible to get on with him. He has no sense of humour; he's not a sportsman in any sense. He's preternaturally childish about life. The poor chap takes himself so seriously, and builds a solid wall of priggish self-importance around himself! But I had no idea that he would do a thing like that, even a little thing like that. Those are perhaps the ways of genius, perhaps the ways of imbeciles, too!

"I admire your sticking to your guns. Most people will think you're mad to leave your husband for such a reason, but I don't see how with your temperament you could have done differently. What is sad about it to me is that the finer the nature the more easily is it crushed."

"Oh, am I mad, Charlie, to take it as I do?"

"I should certainly not have done anything like it, but then, I'm not your sort. You've done about what I should have thought you'd do . . ."

"Honestly?"

" . . . Yes, I don't think you're mad."

"Thank you."

"Perhaps I ought to tell you a little more about myself than I ever have, Rhoda, and correct any false impressions that I may have given you unwittingly."

"Oh, please."

He said he had been born with every advantage that an Englishman can inherit except a fortune and a title, and that he had never distinguished himself as a young man in anything but sports. He failed at Oxford; he got himself generally disliked. Finally he married for money and took to gambling. Again and again he would try to pull himself together and turn life into something decent. Finally he had an insignificant position in the foreign office and was made the scapegoat of a scandal which involved the sale of some information, and his wife began to sue for divorce. He was prevailed upon to leave the country, and after extensive travelling he had settled down in Boston and hoped to find employment that would permit him to live in the luxury to which he was accustomed. This, however, he never found. When the war broke out he had tried to get into active service, but an opportunity to whitewash himself with a bit of glory never came.

"You see the war was a great thing for chaps who were buried in disgrace. All you had to do was get into the service. I thought that I surely could get into the infantry and that if I got out at all it would be possible to go back to England and find the past wiped out. But no sooner did I enlist than they sent me back here on a mission where I remained throughout the whole four years, and there

isn't the slightest chance of my getting on my feet again in England.

"A friend of mine who had left home somewhat as I did went into the infantry and was killed. The loss of that man meant more to me than anything in years. He adored England, but he couldn't keep out of the courts there. He went into the war as though it were a sort of suicide club. He was my best friend, Rhoda . . ."

"What a wonderful end! Dying for the lover who rejects you!"

"Well, it's jolly depressing to me."

"I wish there were a suicide club for me, Charlie. I wish I could end it all perfectly honourably. I don't like the idea of divorce between Flarey and me, and even if we did divorce I don't see how I could pull my life together. It isn't so much that I've failed as it is that I'm disillusioned, and I've lost the power of creating the illusion to follow. I've been so jealous of my work; I've been so anxious to have that to fall back upon, to buoy up my mind and character. Now that's gone, too."

"Surely, you can get on in journalism again."

"I suppose I could, but I don't feel like trying all the same dodges over again. There are so few things that I do well anyway. And then my journalism has associations. I think of it as I think of this house, something closely connected with the ideal that Flarey and I were to live up to. Charlie, you don't know how low I am. I hated to tell you what happened because the incidents were so trivial in themselves. And yet I'm crushed by it. I can't rehabilitate. I can never face this circle about us here, and I'm too old to begin everything all over again."

Gilman felt for his handkerchief; he was a man whose emotion seemed to Rhoda charming, though she always felt that it was too thin, and never dared to trust it.

"I say, Rhoda," he said, "I was brought up with the

idea that a man shouldn't show emotion any more than a horse should show temper, and the consequence is that whenever I feel the least hit by it I get all dizzy and don't know how to express anything."

"It's very sweet of you to feel for me, Charlie, but I assure you there's nothing . . ."

"Hang it all, I wonder if we couldn't possibly pull ourselves out of all this together. I say, I'm terribly fond of you, and I'll try to be an awfully decent chap. . . ."

"Charlie, you're a darling, but I couldn't possibly do it. I don't know exactly why, but I couldn't. I'm too old. Love isn't enough for me to build my life upon now, and besides, I love Flarey while I hate him. It's only my self-respect that keeps me from him and the feeling that only the loss of me will make a man of him. I respond sincerely to your friendship, as I always have to your sympathy. Your offer honours me. You've meant a great deal to me, Charlie, and I'm sorry if I hurt you. I didn't mean it."

"Why of course you couldn't hurt me, Rhoda."

"What I really need is a suicide club."

"Are you sure, Rhoda? Because if you want one I think I can arrange it. Are you sure that your nerve will last to the end?" He drew a chair up close to her, and talked in a low tone for nearly an hour. Rhoda was amazed at his plan. It filled her with new hope; it calmed her old fears. "What do you think of it?" he asked at length.

"I'll see the thing through," she said.

He kissed her forehead. "You're perfectly ripping!"

"I'll come and see you before I leave," said Rhoda. "Let me think it over alone to-night."

CHAPTER XV

Meanwhile I had been at a remote little theological school near Pittsburgh, delivering a baccalaureate address for my dear friend the Reverend Dr. Havelock, a man whose obscurity is only equalled by the sweetness of his spiritual nature. The old fellow was so preoccupied with domestic affairs that spring—he had just become the father of twins and his wife suffered a nervous breakdown—that he asked me to speak for him. Knowing that the candidates for the degree in his school were likely to be better informed than I upon matters historical, I chose for my subject religious persecution as it exists today, but I doubt whether I succeeded in convincing many divines that fanaticism has followed belief out of the churches and into the streets.

Much as I dislike both unnecessary travel and polite preaching, I was glad to be out of Belmont during the week of Rhoda's break with her husband. The story of what happened has come to me from Rhoda chiefly, and from all the others involved, including Miss Goodshoe of Boston, who knew much more than she was willing to admit to Rhoda but kept silent out of respect for her sensibility. The first inkling that I had of the seriousness of the situation was conveyed to me when I met Wentworth as I passed through New York.

My train reached that city about five in the afternoon and Wentworth, who was visiting friends there, had asked me to dine with them and go to a play in the evening. I observed that the boy was in a bad humour but thought that it was due chiefly to the severe presence of his father. That, however, was not in this instance the only cause of

his clouded mind. After the first act his young friends went out to the smoking room and, when I suggested accompanying them, Went urged me to stay and speak with him privately.

"Anything wrong?" I asked, feeling for my check book and pen.

"A good deal is wrong, father. But you needn't go on looking for your purse on my account."

"Sorry. You don't make the most of your opportunities, Went. I never met the Senator unexpectedly without pulling his leg."

"Seriously, father, I'm worried."

"What's wrong?" I looked at him and saw that he was very unhappy, and I dropped my unwelcome humour completely.

"I want you to go and see Rhoda right away when you get back. She's in a sort of fix. Everything's wrong with her. I wanted to talk to her but I didn't see clearly how I could help."

"Isn't she leaving for Chester with Flarey this week?"

"No," he said faintly—Wentworth always dropped his voice softly in admitting what he deprecated. "No, Flarey is here in New York for the summer, and Rhoda has left him for good."

"Gracious!" I said. "I hope you're mistaken."

"I'm not."

"Bad news for us, boy!"

"See if you can't do something about it, father."

"What do you think I can do that you can't do yourself?"

"I don't know."

I saw Flarey later that evening. We stopped at the Arlington Club for something to eat before I left them to take the train, and Flarey was there in company. He got up and came over to our table.

"I was terribly sorry," he said, putting his hand on my shoulder, "that the press didn't give an account of your address," and then he was off before I had a chance to hold him.

On arriving in Boston the next morning I went to the City Club. Before sitting down to breakfast I telephoned to Jenkins to tell him to send Greggory over with the machine. Jenkins said that my brother had left word to notify him immediately upon my arrival, and I then disturbed Hallam at his breakfast table. He begged me to go to his office that morning.

I returned to my breakfast and papers. I get into the habit of looking up my friends before I do anything else when I pick up a newspaper, and the fact that Rhoda had retired from the Book Review of the *Boston Tribune* was the first thing I observed. It quite startled me, for I had not been willing to believe that things were as bad as my son thought. What was she leaving the paper for? If she and Flarey were not on the best of terms, there would be all the more reason for her to hold steadfastly to her job.

I finished breakfast and after a few errands I stopped to see Hallam. His office help greeted me like so many traffic officers and tried to push me into his private room a little faster than I cared to walk. Hal was in a towering rage.

"Hello, Lee," he said, shaking hands. "I didn't know that you were out of town."

"How are you?" I said. "Usually you don't send for me after you've won something big."

"It's your cousin, Rhoda."

"My cousin?"

"Well," he said with a smile, "she always was much nearer you than any of the rest of us."

"Not when she's in trouble, Hal. Then she's your client, Rhoda."

"Do you know what's wrong with that family?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, I don't know whether I ought to tell you."

"So far as I'm concerned you can tell me anything you like unless it's something that you don't care to have Rhoda know that I learned from you."

"Oh!" said Hal. I perceived that I had offended him.

"Don't misconstrue that remark, Hal. Rhoda and I have been closer as friends than you and I have been as brothers, and if there's anything about her that she wants me to know she'll tell me. If she doesn't want me to know it I should rather not find out from someone else."

My brother bit off the end of a cigar and lit it with a flourish.

"You're perfectly right to stick to that position if you feel like it!" Hallam never experienced the slightest difficulty nor a moment's hesitation in calling things right or wrong, or pronouncing your casual opinion your position. "But," he went on, "I'm perfectly right to insist upon telling you what everybody knows. I won't discuss with you what she tells me her plans are, but I insist upon your knowing that Child is in New York, and that Rhoda has thrown over her job and is hitting a pretty fast pace with that Gilman, that Englishman."

"Is that all you insist upon my knowing?" I asked, getting up.

"Yes. I don't mean to insinuate a damned thing. I say it out of a sincere wish for her own good. I don't know what there is in it, Lee, but I hope you can bring that woman to her senses before she does some irreparable harm."

"I have no doubt that she'll tell me about it, Hal.

Meanwhile, if I were you I'd not give the matter quite so much thought."

"You wouldn't, would you? Well, what do you expect me to give thought to? There are ways to do everything; it's my business to try to get my clients to do things the decent way. Here I've been handling her estate and her mother's estate before her for twenty years without asking for a cent, and without Rhoda's ever having a loss except on things she did without my consent, and now I can't exert the slightest influence to keep her from covering herself and the family at large with a nasty scandal! I've drawn a good many wills but I haven't drawn one with a scandal yet! And now . . ."

"I've never been consulted on her will, Hal."

"You will be on this one."

"No, I won't."

"I've asked her to consult you."

"How do you know she will?"

"She will."

"Well, don't let it distress you, Hal."

"You'd be mad, too, Lee, if you were treated that way."

"Well, I'll see what I can do."

"Thanks."

"Good-bye," I said, taking my hat with relief.

"Let's hear from you," he shouted as I closed the door.

Shortly I was in Belmont, opening my mail and giving directions about the house. The effect of visiting my brother tended to make me restrain myself from going right over to see if Rhoda was about that early in the morning. The combination of Went's prognostications and my brother's vehemence had me fairly convinced that something out of the ordinary had occurred.

My mail brought me nothing of interest and having already exhausted the papers I got up from my table

and started to fill a pipe. Glancing out of the window I saw Rhoda coming across the grass intending, evidently, to come in by way of the very window through which I was looking. She was bright and fresh against the green of the lawn, and dodged the spray from the sprinkler with a gracefulness and vigour that made me cast aside for the moment all my dolorous reflections. I opened the window wider.

"Hello, Lee," she said clapping her hands, "I'm so glad you're back! I've been watching your windows every day. It's been so lonely without either of you here!" She took my hand in both of hers. I looked at her trying to fathom what was to me a mystery, her real valuation of our friendship. Knowing what was in the air I was tense, as if a little word or deed would break something within.

"Poor old Lee," she went on, as she stroked my hand.

"Come in," I urged, "I can't see you so well in this blaze of light."

"Did you hear about Charlie?" she asked as we sat down.

"What about him?"

"He was terribly hurt . . . thrown from a horse . . . broke his collar bone and three ribs!"

"Good Lord! I thought he was the best horseman in the world!"

"He is, poor chap. They're always the ones who get thrown. That's just how it happened. He was trying to make some money, buying horses at auctions and getting them in shape to sell again, and he picked up a wild brute that nobody can ride. Well, he started to work him in and just as he was riding out of the stables—he was taking him over to the armoury—the brute threw him up against a brick wall so hard that he lost consciousness before he reached the ground."

"That's a great shame, Rhoda. Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes, go over and see him. He's in his rooms. Wouldn't go to a hospital, and I've been taking care of him for the last few days. I got to know him awfully well, Lee, and I ask you to remember that no matter what high crimes and misdemeanours may hang over his head, he's a man of great parts, and he might be a friend of yours, after I'm gone."

"After you're gone!"

She nodded, and turned suddenly away.

"Rhoda, this is too much! Hal tells me this morning that you're coming to consult me on your will, and then you talk about looking after your friends, 'when you're gone'! Now, I say either let down or let up!"

"I'm not going to consult you on my will—not that I wouldn't if I needed to."

"Not even on the scandal?"

"Your brother's a fool! I'm leaving Charlie something, because he needs it."

"Well, thanks ever so much for not consulting me, Rhoda." I could not suppress a whistle, but I liked the idea.

"Let's not talk about that now," she said impulsively.

"Not if you should rather not, Rhoda dear. But you must admit that it's something of a shock for a man of my years, and you so young and beautiful!"

"Is it so terribly scandalous?"

"It's damned untactful."

"Is that all?" she asked, smiling.

"That's all I see in it."

"Lee," she said, squatting down upon the floor, "I want to sit down at your feet and cry like a child."

"Why should you sit at my feet? Why shouldn't I sit at yours?"

"Because I wouldn't let you once before; I thought you were too old, and you're so terribly much younger than anybody in the world! Because I once hardened my heart against you; because, Lee, you've been a sort of father to me."

She leaned against me and looked up until her eyes filled with tears, and then she hid them from me. I loathed myself for letting her do it, but I did not well see that I had a right to stop her. Rhoda was never more beautiful to my eyes than she was that morning. She wore the simplest possible smock and skirt of shantung with an edge of bright green woollen embroidery to break the monotony. It clothed her form without constraint. Her voice had become estranged from her usual speaking voice. The pitch was different; it sounded distant and yet it seemed to be unmistakably hers. Perhaps, while she sat there dreaming, a deeper reality had taken control.

"Lee, I like your house better than mine. You did a better job than I did." The words went to my heart directly, and without thinking of what I was saying I blurted out:

"It was conceived in love, Rhoda. When I built it I hoped that you would come and make it your own."

"Why did you ever let me marry anyone else?"

"Why, because you didn't want to marry me, old girl."

"You should have made me want to, Lee."

"I never knew how, Rhoda. I always wanted to be loved, but I never knew how to appeal to people."

Suddenly aware of the words that were slipping from my lips, I got up hastily. "Rhoda, I wonder if it's quite honourable for me to talk that way. I'm terribly sorry. I hope . . ."

"Do you think your little girl would ever let you do a dishonourable thing? I've left Flarey for good and all!"

She gave me her version of the story, and we talked

about it for an hour or two. It was not for me to offer her any advice, and I do not know what I could have said that would have had any value. After all, her opinion of Flarey was so much better than mine that I dared not comment very much on his behaviour in not going to Chester as he had agreed.

After lunch our conversation dragged. Rhoda was particularly warm and affectionate that afternoon. She did not realize how she was awakening in me emotion that I had thought long since buried forever. She continued in the mood of childishness, as though that alone made it possible for her to keep from breaking down. Finally we walked over to the Childs'. I had promised to run in to see Gilman, but I begged to walk home with Rhoda first.

It did not surprise me to find everything in confusion. There were boxes and clothing and trunks lying about. Pictures were down from the walls and the maid and the cook would run about almost hysterically, not really knowing or caring what they were doing. When people are moving there is hope, but when people are breaking up forever there is something about the scene that clings to the memory.

"Lee,"—I could hardly realize that Rhoda was talking—"I want you to take something that's mine to remember me by. Do any of those vases appeal to you? I know I have no books that you don't possess already. Oh, I have it! Take that lamp you always admired. Do you remember that it used to be in my little apartment? That rug I want you to give to Went. He has always adored it. Oh, Lee, do you think I shall have the strength to go through with this?"

"Rhoda," I stammered, "where are you going? What are you planning to do?"

"I'm going away, far, far away. I shall never see you again, you sweet old friend. I shall never come back, but

you will find out from Went long after it's too late to stop me. . . .

"Don't stop me, Lee. I shouldn't have the strength to withstand you. Let me go. Let me go, a free woman! It's so wonderful to be free again, even if one is a total wreck!"

"You don't want to tell me?"

"I couldn't bear it."

I said nothing.

"And, Lee," she said, holding me to her, "I've been too obviously friendly with Charlie at the same time that I broke with Flarey. I know there'll be horrid things said of me when I'm gone, and my will will seem to prove it! But I ask you, as much as you can, to clear my name. I've tried to be straight. It would have been so easy to have lived a comfortable life with Flarey, so easy not to work in town and to spend my time loafing. And it would have been so easy to forgive Flarey his trifling offenses. But I couldn't. I had to live my life as I thought a woman should."

"I know it, old lady," I said.

"And I haven't the strength to begin all over again. So I'm going to clear out, and none of you will ever hear of me."

I kissed her lips and believed all that she had said.

The manner in which we took leave of each other is something that I cannot clearly remember. An hour or so later, however, I was at Charlie Gilman's bedside.

"Hang it all!" he was saying, with his usually cheerful countenance shining through the bandages with difficulty, "I say it's Christly decent of you to come!"

CHAPTER XVI

It was a summer of unconscionable restlessness for me. I remained in Belmont, unable to get into the mood to go elsewhere. For a good part of the time I was alone and the fact that I seemed incapable of accomplishing any work that pleased me had a depressing effect. My mind suffered from torturous doubt and suspicion. It was in vain that I sought diversion; nothing interested me, and it was futile for me to try to forget my loss by wandering among my friends and relations. Men's minds did not for the moment attract my sympathy or give me amusement, and the women I met seemed to me the merest phantoms.

I had gone to see Gilman a number of times, in accordance with my promise, and found him in an enviable condition. The things from which he suffered were concretely present to his senses, and the glorious consciousness of getting well seemed to buoy him up to extravagant heights of expectation. He was soon upon his feet, and shortly thereafter he left Boston without giving me any address or information, and I have not heard from him since.

Sometimes when you lose sight of a friend you feel confident that the future will bring you together again. But at other times you know that nothing but the least expected accident will effect another meeting. I felt that way about Gilman. There was about him no sense of responsibility, nothing that tied him down in life. He left you like a leaf that falls from a tree.

It was not that he was ungenerous or ungrateful—though of course he owed me no gratitude—nor was it that he did not care for his friends. If there was any reason for his behaviour I think it was incapacity. Fine as his mind

was in many intellectual respects, and present as was his sympathy and intuitive kindness, he seemed incapable of viewing anything in life in terms of continuity. Perhaps he had felt the need at one time in his life to teach himself to forget. What remained with him constantly were acquired habits, the formal graces that had become second nature. He forgot that he ever was a horseman until he got into the saddle, but once there it was impossible for him to make a mistake. He could forget that he was a gentleman and wallow in a condition of life essentially base, but when he found himself in evening clothes and in the presence of women whom he admired, he was by far the least offending man I have ever met. Habit remained, breeding and acquired tendencies remained, but his mind had no power to sustain his thought, his remembrance, or his emotion. He was off, and I never expect to shake his hand again, or delight in the flexibility of his highly expressive countenance that records sometimes only what he wishes, and at other times frankly, boyishly, naïvely, the passing thoughts and emotions of his highly sensitive nature.

I think I was the only person remaining in Boston to regret his departure, unless perhaps some schoolboys at the Latin Grammar School. He had never been able to attach himself either to the staff of Arlington or any other college in the neighbourhood, and he had never been able to make any considerable impression on society. He had no home, no family, and no means, and why should Boston open her cold arms? He had succeeded as Rhoda's protégé, and only in that capacity, and when Rhoda went away he could not dissociate his name from his former hostess's vaguely scandalous behaviour.

I, too, took a share in the scandal, oddly enough. My sympathy for Rhoda made people see evil in our past friendship that they had never recognized before. However, there was nothing serious in what people thought of

the part I was alleged to play in the disruption of Flarey's home. It was perhaps a blessing in disguise. It gave people who had always tried to veil their contempt for me something to be contemptuous about, and it gave them a sense of righteousness for having been unwilling to attempt to understand me or my work. What was more to the point than my having received Gilman was the fact that I did not join in with the general condemnation of Rhoda's behaviour.

It was for me a most unhappy summer except for Wentworth and his education, which I had accepted years ago as the most important paternal responsibility of my life. Naturally it was beginning to pass out of my hands. In the first place I agree without question that a man must educate himself, and I never thought the contrary, but I consider it a serious matter to present the proper opportunities. I had felt—it was my secret vanity—that no school was good enough for him, and I therefore spent a very large part of my time trying to be a model schoolmaster.

Realizing that such a relationship becomes increasingly precarious as the boy grows older, I told him frankly in June that it was our last summer together, and the last effort of mine to serve as educator to my son and heir. Whether this decision filled him with pleasure or pain, or whether it gave him a little of both, I had already impressed him with too much discretion to divulge. But I did my duty with an earnestness that added a solemn joy to the unhappiness of my mind.

It had been my custom not to let one of his long vacations go by without some thoroughly disciplined effort to improve the mind. The schedule was this summer lighter than ever before, as Wentworth was beginning to occupy his leisure suitably without inspiration from me. In general I attempted to prepare him for the courses that he had

himself selected and to open up to him the possibility of pleasure and satisfaction in the studies that he had through some caprice of intellect decided to shun. Toward the last of September we were reading English History together. I have long contended that practically all English History is taught in our schools and colleges from the Whig historians, and I thought it of value to acquaint him thoroughly with the Tory point of view before following his course at college. I therefore had him study David Hume and Bolingbroke. Some time and labour were required before he could be brought to consider either of these men quite seriously, but presently he succumbed to their wisdom and style sufficiently to understand and respect the erroneous workings of their minds.

It was the last discussion of our study; you might almost say it was our last lesson. We got up early and went for a walk. Wentworth's duty was to defend the Stuarts in general and Charles I. in particular. I was indeed gratified at the eloquent defense that he gave of that unhappy monarch, for I knew that his sympathies really lay with the regicides. And, as it is with work when it is well done, it was done quickly, and we were through before we reached home. Both of us were sad and it was hard for me to break the silence.

"Next summer," I said with hesitancy, "you may do anything you please or go anywhere you like."

When we got home we picked up the mail and sat down to breakfast. There was a letter from my brother Hallam. I poured out my coffee, and opened it.

"Dear Lee," he said, "I wish you would do me a favor. Rhoda is dead, and I want you to go and tell Mr. Child, in the event that he may not know. I received word as her executor. It seems that she went into Russia under the auspices of the British Society of Friends. At any rate she is reported by that organization to have died of typhus at Moscow, Sept. 1st, evidently immediately upon her arrival. I'm sorry to put this on you."

It stunned me. Except for a yearning sensation within and the fast beating of my heart, I felt quite still, as though I had suddenly turned out to be hollow. Wentworth was rustling his papers and reaching into his pockets for a cigarette. I got up and put the letter in his hands, and then left the table.

I went out on the porch and recalled the many times that Rhoda had come up the walk to see us, and of the warmth and truth, and the joy and sorrow that she brought with her.

In a moment Wentworth joined me, and returned the letter carefully folded.

"Rhoda asked me to show this to you some day, father. I think I should have wanted you to see it anyway." There was an uncertain lustre in his eyes and a hoarseness in his voice, as he gave me another letter.

"I was very fond of Rhoda, son."

"She told me so, father," he said, as though he was still incredulous about it.

I glanced up. It had always seemed impossible to Went that father and son had loved the same woman, and it puzzled him whether to disbelieve my love or his own. He went to the corner of the porch and picked up his tennis racket.

"I'm sorry to leave you, father," he said, "but I promised a few sets with Pauline this morning."

Pauline was a young person who lived next door. Already she was impatiently striking a tennis ball upon the porch and I could see the regular movements of her white outing clothes through the hedges. She plays vigorous tennis, rides well, and has a vile, though guileless tongue. Her hair and her skirts are flippantly short. I sometimes think she would like to be like Rhoda, if she could be so without using her mind; and, as I compare her when she walks by the house with what my memory

holds of Rhoda at the same age, I never know whether she is a preposterous fraud or whether she and Wentworth stand over the dead bodies of Rhoda and myself. My son cut across the lawn whistling, and she ran out and took his free arm. He did not carry her racket.

I went to the telephone and told my brother that I declined to be the bearer of such news to O'Flarity Child, and then I took up the letter that Went had placed in my hands.

DEAR WENT:

I'm going into Russia with the British Society of Friends. For some reason or other, I feel sure that I shall never finish the work I am undertaking. I don't know why, but I feel the presence of death, and it comes closer every day.

Do you remember that I promised to write to you? And do you know that I am not writing to anyone else? Not even Charlie Gilman, who set me up in this crusade?

I promised you for a number of reasons, two of which I wish to tell you. I love you very dearly, dear boy, and I believe that you also loved me.

To you alone has my life had a real meaning. To you I could give all that my soul had to give. You were not my child, but I tried to give you what so many mothers try to give their children but cannot, I know not why.

You were a great joy to me. You were the one thing in a life, full to the brim of failure and sorrow, that makes me feel the slightest satisfaction of realization. In your life alone I was a complete personality; I did my whole duty, I gave you all that I had to give, and then stepped out of the way. You have learned to love one woman, dear Went. All that I ask of you is that you never love a woman less worthy of your love than I.

When time shall make this letter seem less personal to you, and when time shall make the loss of your first love less bitter, please show it to Lee, your father and my friend.

RHODA.

THE END